EDUCATION

New Dimensions

Ramakrishna Math Bangalore

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

Swami Vivekananda declares that education is the panacea for all our evils. According to him `man-making' or `character-building' education alone is real education.

Keeping this end in view, the centres of the Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission have been running a number of institutions solely or partly devoted to education.

The Ramakrishna Math of Bangalore (known earlier as Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama) started the `Sri Ramakrishna Vidyarthi Mandiram' in 1943, as a hostel for college boys wherein the inculcating of moral and spiritual values in the minds of the inmates was given the primary importance. The hostel became popular very soon and the former inmates who are now occupying important places in public life, still remember their life at the hostel.

In 1958, the Vidyarthi Mandiram was shifted to its own newly built, spacious and well-designed, premises. In 1983, the Silver Jubilee celebrations were held in commemoration of this event. During that period a Souvenir entitled ``Education: New Dimensions'' was brought out. Very soon, the copies were exhausted. However, the demand for the same, since it contained many original and thought-provoking articles, went on increasing. We are now bringing it out as a book with some modifications.

Except the one article of Albert Einstein which has been taken from an old journal, all the others are by eminent monks of the Ramakrishna Order who have contributed to the field of education, in some way or the other.

We earnestly hope that all those interested in the education of our younger generation, especially those in the teaching profession, will welcome this publication and give wide publicity to the ideas contained in it.

S. H.

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Our Education

Swami Vireswarananda

Let us take a view of the educational system prevailing in our country now. Whichever side we look at, we find only a depressing condition-whether in politics or economics or social relationships, and lastly even in our educational system. All the confusion that we find in this country is because of our basic mistake in the educational system. Boys grow up according to the training that is given to them. And if that system is defective, then that defect will be found in everybody when he grows and we cannot blame him. We are now more or less following the European system of education which was forced on us by the British people when they came here. That was suitable for their social conditions in the West. But it was not suitable in our case. More or less the same system is now being followed. There is no connection between the objectives of the educational system and the aspirations of the nation. The aspiration of the nation has been for centuries the realization of the Ultimate Reality. And society has been modified and adjusted suitably in such a way that all can find a certain amount of his world's experience and then reach the goal. And education also was planned on the same lines. Great stress was laid on *parāvidyā*- not that *aparā-vidyā* was denied or neglected, for India was leading in *aparā-vidyā* also in that age. But the stress was on *parā-vidyā*, character-building, morality and things like that. The personality of the boys developed in the proper way so that they could attain the goal which was cherished by the nation. There were no universities or colleges in the modern sense. The boys were to go through certain extra-curricular activities, which helped them to build their character, to purify their mind, make their minds strong. They had to live up to a certain ethical conduct, observe strict continence and practise such other disciplines during their student life. All this helped to nourish their minds. The mind is the instrument through which one knows, and if

that is defective, if that is not properly kept up, it will be difficult for the mind to gather knowledge.

In the case of Swami Vivekananda the mind was so well-equipped that he could read volumes in no time. Once when he was travelling, one of his brother-disciples was with him. They happened to be near a library. Swamiji asked his brother-disciple to get some books from the library. Every day, the brother-disciple would go and bring one or two volumes named by Swamiji and the books would be returned the next day and another set of books taken. The Librarian thought, ``What is this? It takes months and months to study one of these volumes, and here every day books are being returned. Is it all a show?'' He expressed this doubt to the brother-disciple. The brother-disciple told about this to Swamiji. So one day Swamiji went to the library and asked the Librarian to put him any question from the books he had sent him. The Librarian questioned him and Swamiji was able to give him precise answers. Swamiji said, ``You see, you read words. When you take a book you read word by word. But I don't read word by word, I read page by page. I read the first few words of the page and the last few words of the page and I know what is in that page.'' So, when the memory, the mind, is developed in a particular way, it helps us to gather knowledge clearly. Such training of the mind is absent in our modern educational system. So this difference between the secular education and the *parā-vidyā* which is neglected, has caused all the troubles in the educational system. That is why we find so much confusion.

Added to this, the pull by the political parties, to make the students come to their side to help them in propaganda, has a bad effect. All this has helped to spoil the educational system in our country. In North India the examinations were over in one of the Universities in the year 1978 or so, but the results are not yet (February 1981) published. And the results of students who have appeared for the examinations afterwards have been held up though they are ready, because the results of the previous examinations have not been declared. That is how our education goes on. Unless the basic philosophy of education is changed and importance is given to *parā-vidyā*-character-building, mind-development, etc.-it will be very difficult to build a greater India. Once a professor of science came to see the laboratory of one of our colleges. The professor- in-charge of that department took that gentleman around the laboratory. When he came to the place where the microscopes were kept that gentleman tried to look through one of them. He found he could not see clearly. So, he took the microscope lens, cleaned it with his kerchief, replaced it and then was able to see clearly. The microscope is the instrument with which you are able to see things and gather knowledge about them. If it is not kept clean, but left dirty, how can you get a clear idea about the object which you are examining? The lens must be kept clean. Similarly, it is only if the mind is kept pure and strong, by observing certain ethical and moral principles, that it can easily grasp the subtle truth of things. This part of the education which we had in ancient India is now missing.

It is precisely to fill this gap that our Ramakrishna Mission is striving. That is why we find that in all the residential schools and other educational institutions run by us, brilliant boys go out every year and takeup important positions in the life of the nation. Not that the secular side has been neglected, since the positions of the boys in the University examinations show that they are well up in the secular side also, but the stress is laid on *parā-vidyā*. Unless the

present educational system is made responsible for building up men of character, who can handle the problems of the country in an efficient way, there will be no hope for the country.

The Aims of Our Education

Swami Gambhirananda

I

Comenius, the great educational philosopher, said that education is the development of the whole man. This means that education should touch, chasten, and culture all the aspects of the human personality, his body, mind and spirit. True education ought to give a corrective to the entire outlook of man, removing all the angularities in his personality and turning him out to be a man of robust mind and sound character, whose conduct and behaviour under varying situations become edifying and worthy of emulation. Such a character cannot be fashioned by merely imparting to man what is called the formal and liberal education of the arts and the sciences. Some other discipline is necessary for the mind and the spirit of man. That training of the mind and the spirit can be effectively brought into being only by introducing the elements of moral and religious education into the general scheme of educational curriculum. Plato, the worthy successor of Socrates, held that `Education consists in giving to the body and soul all perfection of which they are susceptible.' Here, in India, voicing the spirit and wisdom of our great sages, and fully embodying them in a most powerful form, Swami Vivekananda says: `Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man.' Hence it is that all our plans of education and paradigms of training should have this goal clearly before them, namely, `giving to the body and soul all perfection of which they are susceptible' or `manifestation of the perfection already in man.' These, then, ought to be our educational ideals.

Against this background, it was heartening for us to learn that the Government of India was seriously thinking of appointing a high power commission of educationists of standing to go into the question of imparting moral and religious education in schools and colleges and to advise them as to how best such a measure could be implemented in keeping with our age-old traditions as well as our modern aspirations. The decision of the government, we must add, has not come a day sooner; our wonder is why even so much delay became necessary. Nevertheless, we heartily welcome the step taken by them and congratulate them on their wise decision.

This measure, we apprehend, may give rise to some mixed feelings in many minds. It may be asked: How will religious education fit in a country which has declared itself to be a secular State? We may remind those whose thinking works on these lines that secularism in our concept, and as it has been clearly defined by our leaders, has no conflict with the religious spirit or religious education.

We may recall in this connection the words of the late Prime Minister Nehru who defined secularism in India thus: `This did not mean that they (Indians) were to be irreligious or a

nation of atheists. A secular state only meant that every individual in it was free to profess any faith he chose.' When the Constitution of the country was still on the anvil, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan had said: `India had always, even as early as 3000 B.C. , accepted the fulfilment of the divine possibilities in man's nature as the true aim of human existence, and our religion has never asked us to accept anything in blind, unthinking faith..... Secularism means the adoption of the scientific spirit. It means the absence of religious arrogance or dogmatism, an attitude of impartiality so far as different religions are concerned, equality of opportunity for all religions, and no dogmatising for any one religion..... It does not mean that we would be non-religious or dogmatically religious.'

In the light of these avowals, there should be no misapprehension in any mind with regard to the introduction of religious education in the country. On the contrary, the consequences of an educational system that does not possess the character-building influence, supplied by moral and religious training, are too dreadful to contemplate. Rightly approached, with a proper perspective of the aims and objectives to be achieved, the measure that the government is contemplating to introduce is bound to elicit wide appreciation and willing cooperation from all sections of our people. Truly speaking, in this measure is reflected the deep anxiety that is welling up in the minds of a great majority of our thinking people, who are earnestly interested in the preservation of our national cultural heritage, its values and ideals, and who are worried at the spectacle of the new trends that are developing in the field of education.

II

Anyone who seriously ponders over what is taking place at present in the realm of education all over the country is sure to notice that a soul-killing morbidity has seized our sacred temples of learning, and the disease is eating into their very vitals. And the tonic to restore them to normal health and vigour can come only by infusing into their body the beneficent influence accruing from moral training and religious education-a revival in part at least of the elevating, sanctifying atmosphere that prevailed in our ancient system of education, oriented according to the needs and moods of the present age. Only thus can we hope to tone up the educational institutions, enabling them to effectively play the role assigned to them in the context of our national, social and individual lives.

Educational institutions are the anvils on which the nation's citizens are forged and fashioned. It is therefore of vital importance that such healthy and helpful conditions be created in the educational field as are conducive to the all-round growth of the personality of the student, who, after all, constitutes the citizen of tomorrow. By merely imparting secular education, viz. the formal and liberal education-the teaching of the arts and the sciences-the all-round development of the students is not ensured. No doubt, such an education develops their intellect and widens the horizon of their knowledge of this world; but there it stops. It does not give them a sense of moral values and the ideas of morality. At best, it prepares them for a profession of life, to eke out the means of their physical existence, but nothing more. Certainly, it does not hold out any promise to produce men of great character. The goodness of character results from quite a different kind of training and education; it

depends on moral training and religious education. It was an eminent British educationist who said, `Educate men without religion and you make them clever devils.' Of the responsibility that the school owes to society, John Dewey, the famous American philosopher, says: `The school is fundamentally an institution erected by society to do a certain specific work, to exercise a certain specific function in maintaining the life and advancing the welfare of society' (*Moral Principle in Education*, p. 7). He further says: `The relations of education to the public are different from those of any other professional work. Education is a public business with us, in a sense that the protection and restoration of personal health or legal rights are not. To an extent characteristic of no other institution, save that of the State itself, the school has the power to modify the social order' (*Ibid*, Introduction, p.v.). That being the case, a powerful instrument such as the school should be judiciously used for disseminating moral and religious education side by side with the imparting of formal education.

III

But what is actually happening in the educational field is entirely different, In a world that is becoming increasingly swayed by political and economic forces, educational aims and objectives themselves have undergone transformation in such a way as to meet the needs of those forces. We shall deal with some of these new ideals and motives that are responsible for the recent trends in pedagogy.

The modern era is all out for industrialization. In the countries of the West, this craze has grown out of all proportions. The Eastern countries are not yet fully in its grip, but the day is not far off when they too will be completely overtaken and overwhelmed by it. Because of this craze, in the West, for the last half a century or so, educational methods and ideals were all geared up to the tempo of rapid industrialization. So much so, every branch of learning was oriented in such a way as to produce men who would fit in well in a world that was out for industrialization. The motto was to produce more scientists and more technicians, more engineers and more craftsmen, who would produce more, and ever more, and contribute to the material prosperity of man. The result was that man became machine-minded, goaded by the motive force of material prosperity and happiness.

In the struggle to adjust educational values and ideals to the demands of the new age, the higher values of education that were implicit in the philosophical teachings of a succession of teachers and thinkers have been pushed to the background, if not completely overshadowed-ideals of self-knowledge and self-discipline, the stress on the perfection of the individual, the integration of the personality, and such others. These ideals are no longer to be found in the forefront in any scheme of life, at least not in the educational system that obtains today. Educational institutions are busy in planning for the preparation of man in a manner that would fit him into a world fast moving on the twin wheels of science and technology.

In an age such as ours, to the extent that one becomes interested in the material things of life, one has necessarily to go in for a system of education that will make one most competent to attain that goal. Since man has become machine-minded, his educational needs

are reoriented to meet the demands of the new situation. In such a scheme of education, which we may term as `education for the mechanization of man,' where the only driving force is material progress and prosperity, there is hardly any scope for training in morality and religion.

Next, look at the picture of a state that swears by methods which are totalitarian in form and content. In a totalitarian state, the state takes the position of an all-powerful god. All individuals living in it are, or ought to be, its votaries. The handful of men that hold authority are its high priests, and they dictate and direct the activities of the individuals in every sphere of life. The individual is of little concern in such a set-up; the mighty god of State is all in all, and everyone must bow low before it and its high priests. There is no talk of personal freedom; all individual interests and personal preferences have to be sacrificed at the altar of the god of State. Everyone is a soldier to guard the liberty of the State. In such a set-up too, there is training, there is discipline, but it is all done in the military fashion.

Right from birth, in the home, in the school, in the working sphere, everywhere discipline is enforced in a manner that the individual is made conscious of the role that he is expected to play in a totalitarian regime. If ever one resists or falters, down comes upon him the heavy hand of persecution, which is carried to the very extreme with meticulous precision and perfection. In such a state, the educationists have the special task of producing educational patterns to suit the requirements of the political system and the dictates of the few that wield authority. Every phase of life is geared up to the one supreme purpose of the State. Indoctrination in all spheres, at all levels, is resorted to in a thorough manner, and each individual is most vigilantly watched to see that he or she grows according to the mould that is set for him or her. No protest or unwillingness is ever countenanced, and recalcitrant elements, if any, are coolly done away with, to pave the way for the smooth running of the chariot of State. In such a situation, there can certainly be no liberal education, which is what confers on man his freedom of thought, expression and function. And sure enough, religious education has little to do in such an educational system, which we may term as `education for the militarization of man.'

IV

We shall now turn to a consideration of what we may call `education for the humanization of man.' In this scheme, the human and humane faculties of man are provided free scope for their full expression. By supplying knowledge to the mind of man, he is enabled to think and act for himself in a way that will be beneficial not only to himself, but to the community as well. There is discipline in it too, but that discipline does not thwart the individual's initiative, and lends only a helping hand in the regulation and ordering of his life and conduct and in the development of a refined character. By a gradual process of the training of the mind, one is enabled to realize one's own rights and responsibilities in the context of the socio-political environment in which one lives. It is precisely in this system of education that moral principles have to play a great role in training up the minds of the citizens of a country. What is needed in this type of education, to quote John Dewey once again, `is a genuine faith in the existence of moral principles which are capable of effective application.' And he says further:

`These moral principles need to be brought down to the ground through their statement in social and psychological terms. We need to see that the moral principles are not arbitrary, that they are not `transcendental'; that the term `moral' does not designate a special region or portion of life. We need to translate the moral into the conditions and forces of our community life, and into the impulses and habits of the individual..... The one thing needful is that we recognize that moral principles are real in the same sense in which other forces are real; that they are inherent in community life, and in the working structure of the individual. If we can secure a genuine faith in this fact, we shall have secured the condition which alone is necessary to get from educational system all the effectiveness there is in it' (op. cit., pp. 57-58).

In such an education, the emphasis is not so much on what function a man is trained to perform, as on how he is trained to discharge it. The stress is not on the verb, but on the adverb. Here we have to make a clear distinction between education for the function of man and education of the being of man. Let us explain. If education keeps before it the ideal of turning out men of character who will perform their functions, whatever they may be, in a disinterested and conscien-tious manner, that is education of the being of man. Training of men's talents and faculties to make them fit for the diverse functions in life is education for the function of man-such as an engineer, a doctor, a lawyer, an administrator, a scientist, a craftsman, who are all equally members of the body-social performing their own specific functions. But education of the being of man is devoted to the development of man as a human being first, and then to create facilities for the full expression of the perfection that is inherent in him. Man ought to be human first, and then he can choose to become a poet or a philosopher, a scientist or an artist, an engineer or a doctor, a lawyer or a professor. The common denominator of all these professions is the humanity of the human being. The training of that humanity of the human being is what we would term as the humanization of man, as against the mechanization and militarization of man that we discussed in the last section.

An expert doctor or a thorough-going scientist need not necessarily be a moral person, if, as we have said, the stress is not laid on the development of the being of man. If a good man is also an efficient doctor, then the benefit that flows from such a person is immense. Otherwise, a wicked person who has all the functional qualification of an expert doctor can do incalculable mischief. In the hands of wicked men, the mighty force of scientific knowledge can become a dreadful instrument causing sorrow and suffering to numberless people. That is what is happening to science, which is being abused by unworthy men.

The type of education that we are presently speaking of ought to undertake the responsibility of shaping individuals into fine examples of human personalities, in whom human considerations will reign supreme, and all other interests will occupy only a secondary place. Alongside of formal and functional education, which of course, is essential for everyone who wishes to be a useful member of society, there ought to be that indispensable aspect of education, namely, the education of the moral being of man. Both formal and moral education should be given side by side, in order to prepare man to accept and occupy a responsible and respectable position in society and to discharge the duties that devolve upon

him truly, honestly, and conscientiously. It is this kind of character- building education that Swami Vivekananda wanted when he said: `The end of all education, all training, should be man-making. The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow.' `It is man-making education all round that we want.'

V

Finally, we come to the loftiest aim of education, which we may term as `education for the divinization of man.' In this sphere, it is religion that plays the most vital part. It was Swami Vivekananda, again, who said, `religion is the manifestation of the divinity already in man' and `religion is realization.' Indian scriptures declare that true knowledge-the knowledge of the Self-leads one to immortality. It leads to the liberation of man from the thraldom of matter, to his spiritual emancipation. All our secular knowledge, profundity of scholarships, and intellectual abilities are meant merely for the pleasures and glory of our worldly life, and never for the freedom of the spirit. By this, it is not to be understood that secular knowledge or intellectual training is decried, but the Indian ideal of education, in its highest form, is spiritual realization to enable man to realize his own inherent divine essence. *Vidyā-dāna* or imparting of secular knowledge is no doubt a greal ideal; but greater than that is *jñānadāna* or the gift of spiritual knowledge, the knowledge that liberates. Actually, our scriptures classify knowledge into two kinds, lower and higher, i.e. the knowledge of the various sciences and arts, and the knowledge which leads to the realization of the indestructible, absolute Truth, which is the fundamental spiritual essence of the whole universe. Until that goal is reached, man's education must continue uninterruptedly. The divinity that is latent in man must gradually unfold until he perceives his own identity with that fundamental spiritual essence which is the basis of all phenomenal existence. That is the acme of perfection, the *summum bonum* of life.

According to the Indian scheme, the goal of life is twofold, *abhyudaya* and *niśśreyasa* which takes into consideration both the social betterment of man-meaning all happiness and prosperity, which has *dharma* as the basis of life and conduct-and his spiritual perfection or *mokṣa.* In the preservation of this great national ideal, every Indian has a moral obligation. As such, any scheme of education that is sought to be introduced in the country must be such that it should be ready for a healthy assimilation of the new social and economic programmes, which are meant for developing our material life, at the same time making an earnest endeavour to prepare man for the spiritual perfection of his being. Education, in short, should become a dynamic force both in the social and spiritual aspects of our life.

The Ideal of National Education

Swami Vandanananda

No nation can rise to great heights without enthusiastically coming under a lofty and powerful ideal which seeks to inspire and encourage the individual in every walk of life. This, in fact, constitutes the national ideal which forms, as it were, the backbone, foundation, and life-centre of the nation. All other ideals and ideas are naturally subordinated to and

orientated in the direction of this supreme national ideal. The ideal of education, which exerts such an effective and far-reaching influence on the impressionable minds of youth, should not be alien to the national genius and culture. When a nation's vitality is at a low ebb, the reason is generally to be found in its neglect of its own national ideals and traditions and the senseless imitation of degenerate models and modes of alien thought and activity. For, a nation lives and moves as she thinks, and becomes whatever she believes herself to be. She is made great not by her relative superiority but by her thought about and faith in herself and her national ideals. It has rightly been said that a slave who hugs his chains continues to be a slave, and the free in spirit feels ever free in every circumstance. `Know thyself', is as appropriately applicable to the nation as to the individual. The same spiritual forces that bring about the regeneration of the individual contribute to the moulding of the destiny of the nation.

The task before us as a nation, when we are engaged in a great adventure of freedom and democracy, is a tremendous one. The problems are many and varied. Independence has brought us face to face with realities and imposed on us heavy responsibilities for the present and the future. In these days when plans of national reconstruction and regeneration are taking effective shape in all spheres of progressive nation-building, the problem of the spread of the right type of education calls for deep thinking and an early, correct solution. For, in national reconstruction there is no other factor so important as education. Awakening Indians to a sense of the need for a national as well as nation-making education, Sister Nivedita wrote: `We all know that the future of India depends, for us, on education. Not that industry and commerce are unimportant, but because all things are possible to the educated, and nothing whatever to the uneducated man. We know also that this education, to be of any avail, must extend through all degrees from its lowest and humblest applications upto the highest and most disinterested grades. We must have education of women as well as education of men. We must have secular education as well as religious. And, almost more important than any of these we must have education of the people, and for this, we must depend upon ourselves.' These forceful words were written many years ago when we were experiencing a rut of stagnation and insuperable difficulties on every side-nowhere more helplessly than in the sphere of education. And today, when we are free to shape our national life in accordance with the best ideals we cherish, these words of a great pioneer are even more effective in their appeal.

What is national education? How is education to be made national and nationalizing? It must be clearly understood that the ideal of a truly national type of education has nothing whatsoever to do with any sort of narrow, sentimental or racial or geographical self-glorification. National education is the best and strongest education for nation-making, a training in national idealism, and awakening of the national genius which animates every real vital part of the intellect and emotions of the individual. Nation-making, citizenship-training, and character-building-these are the necessary conditions of all healthy education in all countries, whatever their political position or persuasion. By surrounding the educated young minds with the thought of their nation, country, ideals, and heroes, the safe foundations of a healthy national sense are laid early in life. The construction of national unity, based on a deep sense of cultural solidarity, can never be reached through education whose ideals and

methods are entirely foreign to the land. A national education must be made up of familiar ideas, ideals, and elements so as not to create in the mind of the pupil any scope for disintegration of personality, conflict between home and school, or estrangement of the educated minority from the uneducated majority.

Throughout the centuries India has stood for a distinct national ideal of her own. That ideal is spirituality. India is destined to play the spiritual note in the harmony of nations. Consequently, the aims and values of national education in India have been related to the spiritual growth of man. It is on the growth of man as such and his realization of the divinity within that the well-being of the individual and the nation depends. The Vedāntic ideal of education insists on the development of character and spirituality, on the manifestation of perfection already in man. Man-making education-not a mere bread-and-butter education-is what Swami Vivekananda repeatedly exhorted his countrymen to strive for. He wanted that education should be such that it should inspire tremendous confidence and self-reliance in the educated so that they may be real men among men and hold their heads high. Mere book-learning or intellectual gymnastics can only produce machine-like automatons, with no independent will of their own and fit for nothing better than a mere jellyfish existence. Such an ideal can never satisfy us in the end. Even if the fact that we do not live by bread alone is contested by some, it is easily seen that when the bread and luxuries of life are obtained we hanker after something higher and better, something more inward than outward. And this spiritual hankering grows no less keen than what we experience in the course of our struggle for bare existence. This goes to prove that we can no more ignore the demands of the soul than we can deny ourselves in the needs of bodily life.

Education is not an end in itself, nor can it serve the purpose it is meant to if it has a bland, materialistic or mercenary objective in view. Such negative and wholly unrealistic education can bring no benefit either to the individual or to the country at large. As Swami Vivekananda has often said, the ideal is that we must have the whole of our educational system, spiritual and secular, on national lines, through national methods. The Swami asks pointedly: `The education which does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the struggle for life, which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy, and the courage of a lion-is it worth the name?' Further, unambiguously elucidating what kind of education is best for our country, the Swami says, `We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet. What we want are Western science coupled with Vedānta, brahmacarya as the guiding motto, and also śraddhā and faith in one's own self.' Thus the ideal of education has to be pitched high so that it may be a guiding light and an impelling force even in the face of alluring and deceptive objectives which seek to enslave the free will of the educated and make them tools of narrow political or economic aggrandizement.

No education can be said to be national unless it inspires love for the country, i.e. regard for its past, sympathetic understanding of its present, and faith in its future. It is necessary that education should make the pupil conscious of the worth of the soil on which and the environment in which the plant of his life is growing into maturity. He should understand that his education should fit him into life perfectly well, without making him a problem to others

or others a problem to him. The ideal of education should be such as to make the pupil know with unequivocal plainness that education has a two-fold objective, not only to let him reap the material, intellectual, and spiritual benefits it confers upon him, but also to equip him adequately for the service of the community-of the people, country and religion (jana-desha-dharma). Proper education exerts a healthy and desirable influence on the pupil, thereby restraining the naturally tumultuous youthful urges, emotions and thoughts. Educated persons are, therefore, expected to possess and practise a great amount of self-control, mental concentration, and tole-rant and sympathetic understanding. True scholarship bestows ennobling humility and exalted character (*vidyā dadāti vinayam*).

Educational institutions, societies, and organizations are unavailing and of no consequence unless they foster in their alumni those elements of love, sympathy, and care for all for which there is immediate demand everywhere. The highest education is that which gives us not only power through knowledge but also fullness and introspective vision through love and spiritual solidarity. There can be no truer ideal than to live for that ultimate Truth which emancipates us from bondage to Nature. Such an ideal, rooted in the Vedāntic conception of the divinity of man and the unity of existence, lets us have `access to the life that goes beyond death' and `rises above all circumstances' and gives us `the wealth, not of things but of inner light, not of power but of love.' Says Rabindranath Tagore, `Education is a permanent part of the adventure of life. It is not like a painful hospital treatment for curing them (students) of the congenital malady of their ignorance, but is a function of health, the natural expression of their mind's vitality.' It is this grand conception of the Ātman, of this spiritual unity which is a matter of direct realization, that should form the core of national education in India. It has been so for ages; and it shall continue to inspire, elevate, and unite the nation.

It is usually contended that the past cannot and should not be revived in any walk of life, for that retards progress. It is held that India's backwardness and subservience to alien rule were the result of a blind adherence to the dead weight of the past. It is perfectly true that the dead cannot be brought back to life. Nobody today can plead for a revival in toto of the entire system of ancient educational or other patterns, as they were, without being unrealistic and thoughtless. With the passing of time a new orientation is necessary. But it is the height of folly to demand that at any particular stage of our history we should reject everything that preceded us. It is nothing short of cultural suicide for any nation to abandon its rich inheritance of the experiences of a great and enduring continuity of life and thought. A national culture represents the totality of accumulated experience gained from traditions and institutions tried, tested and found indispensable for the survival of the nation. To write off the great national ideals as outmoded and unfit for further support, not withstanding the thousands of years from which they have descended, is the worst act of self-destruction that any nation can indulge in. Growth means continuity, and on the basis of the past, the present stands and the future is to be built. Practices and methods constantly change from age to age, nay, from day to day. Every zealous guardian of the nation's welfare cheerfully welcomes new methods and practices in education, as in other fields of cultural life, and does not blindly cling to the past at the cost of progress, ignoring the needs of the times. But changes, however attractive and ostensibly necessary, cannot be accepted in haste, especially where they seek to supplant everything that was in the past, including the fundamental ideals and

principles of the national soul.

The great need in India today is the preservation of our cultural integrity. And this is the task of national education. At the same time as we hold to our own ideals, we know we cannot do without the world outside India. We have to learn many things from other nations. To broaden our horizon of knowledge, to travel to other countries, to assimilate into our own society whatever in others is of real worth to us, and to give other nations what we possess in unique abundance-these are the aims which the national education should place before the sons and daughters of India. In order to be able to do these, they have first of all to be educated in what is their great possession which has sustained the nation through trackless centuries of ebb and flow of political, economic, and social life-current, and which they can proudly share with other nations. This is the great desideratum of the Western mode of education that has obtained hitherto in our country. With the passing of the alien political power that dominated the life of the people, it is natural to expect that the system of education sponsored by that power will undergo before long a complete reorientation and become truly national in character. We must grow according to our nature and in full consonance with our national life-current. Now we have the freedom to do it, and in this, as in everything else, the vast majority of people are looking up to the leaders for light and guidance.

Spirituality is our ideal of national education. This ideal is in perfect accord with our national genius and cultural heritage. Any scheme of national education, in the true sense of the term, must accept this ideal in order that education may produce men and women who are truly Indian in every respect. The Indian way of life and thought has to be preserved while the mind and heart are to be made receptive, retentive, and creative. The methods and details of an educational system cannot but change from time to time to suit changed circumstances. But the national ideal cannot be replaced without detriment to national survival. Both science and religion, intellect and intuition, the mundane and the spiritual are to be harmoniously synthesized and expressed in a code of comprehensive education. But the emphasis on the ideal of national education should under no circumstances be relaxed or shifted. Lest we forget, Swami Vivekananda impresses it on our minds: `But remember that as Hindus everything else should be subordinated to our own national ideals. The secret of a true Hindu's character lies in the subordination of his knowledge of European science and learning, of his wealth, position and name, to that one principal theme which is inborn in every Hindu child-the spirituality and purity of the race.' The Hindu ideal is in fact what India stands for. Let there be no confusion about it, though unfortunately today the word `Hindu' is increasingly being misunderstood and mis- interpreted. Spirituality is a positive and the most enduring factor of civilization. It cannot be ignored in any country, least of all in India. All factors needed for nation-building, such as discipline, character, social equality and justice, dedicated service and sacrifice, depend upon our spiritual stamina. A material life of ease and enjoyment is not secure unless based on common ethical standards and in turn, ethical standards cannot be maintained unless attached to our spiritually abiding aims, objectives and goals.

Education in the Light of a Science of Man in Depth

Swami Ranganathananda

1.
Introductory

This subject of education is of very special interest to us, because ours is a developing country; and the word `development' refers particularly to human development. Whether it is our economics or politics, whether it is our industry or science or technology, the main object of all these is to ensure human development in India. We have quantitatively about 700 million people, but quality is lacking; and behind that lack is lack of education, if we understand education in the correct sense and also in the context of twentieth-century thought, particularly biological thought.

Study of man is a profound science in itself. You must remember that this country of ours has devoted a good deal of time and energy to the study of man. We see the Western countries today highly developed. That development has come not primarily through the study of man, but through the study of external nature-physical nature. Such a study gets reflected in man also, because he lives in the physical environment. But the study of man and the science of his possibilities are very much neglected in modern Western culture, compared to its study of external nature. It is that neglect that is being corrected by the Western people today; and they seek India's help to the true understanding of man and his possibilities.

2.

India's Adhyātma-vidyā and Modern Human Distortions
Any education of man or any philosophy of society, to be adequate, must have behind it a science of man in depth. In terms of that science of man alone can you develop a philosophy of society, of culture, and of everything relating to human development and fulfilment. The Western people have developed a concept of man which is rather inadequate, as they themselves admit. I am quoting from the biologist late Sir Julian Huxley who had said: We have only scratched the surface of the science of mind. That scratching has given the Western man a knowledge of man physically; it has yielded a knowledge of man's physiology; of his anatomy; of his neurology; and also a bit of his behaviouristic psychology. But what is the depth dimension of man? This the Western thought did not know, did not also care to know. That is why, towards the end of the last (19th) century, Western psychology was considered to be revolutionised when Freud discovered the subconscious and the unconscious behind the conscious. The study of man in depth in the West was initiated by Freud from that period. But, to us in India, this has been for a few thousand years, since the age of the Upaniṣads, the main occupation-the study of man in depth; and we have developed a profound science of man and his possibilities as a result of our scientific investigation in this field.

We call this science *adhyātma-vidyā or ātma-vidyā*. And today, it is true, literally, that in high educational institutions and in psycho-therapy circles in the West, there is a profound interest in, and respect for, India's science of man in depth.

Western people have problems of man to face, much more intractable than we have in our country. It is true that they have no problems relating to food, shelter, clothing, and education, such as we have in our country; these are the problems we are now trying to overcome through the help of science and technology learnt by us sitting at the feet of the West. But they have more serious problems relating to man's inner life; they are confronted with many psychic distortions in man finding expressions in a variety of social distortions. Today, therefore, there is a rethinking in the West on the subject of man, his possibilities, his destiny, and the education that a human being should get in order to achieve a measure of individual and social well-being and fulfilment. When you find a highly developed society faced with ever-increasing rates of delinquency, drug addiction, drunkenness, and suicide, when all such problems afflict a human society, certainly the thinking people in that society would be compelled to ask this question: `Have we understood man correctly? How shall we handle these problems? Can physical science and its technology alone help us to tackle these distortions? Should we not seek for a deeper science of man than what we possess?' Whenever they ask this kind of question and seek for an answer, they turn to our country and find that India has a profound science and philosophy of man in depth which does not contradict, but only complement, their own great sciences of physical nature.

Let us not forget, in this context, the historic fact that we in India did not neglect the physical sciences in the beginning. We had developed many physical sciences and contributed to human scientific knowledge many fundamental scientific concepts and terminologies. But, later on, we concentrated our energies on man, his inner development and fulfilment. The result was partly good and partly bad; the bad consequence was the gradual neglect by our nation of the sciences of physical nature. That lies behind India's later poverty and social stagnation. The good consequence was that our men and women became more peaceful, more tolerant, more fulfilled, more cultured, more inwardly rich, though poor in pocket, than even many well-to-do peoples of Western societies today. This is literally true that, in spite of wealth, in spite of power, in spite of high education, there is much anxiety and nervous tension in men and women and even children in the West. Almost every second person has got some nervous problem or the other. That is why they seek to study India's contributions to this great subject of man. And, based on these contributions, India had developed her concepts and techniques of human education which are designed to help man to achieve inner enrichment and peace along with wealth and organic satisfactions in man's external life. The Western world is now experiencing a growing interest in this comprehensive approach to education, especially those in the West who think dispassionately, those who question their own assumptions, and those who get the opportunity to come in touch with the deeper levels and spiritual dimensions of Indian thought.

3.

Knowledge versus Wisdom

They come across new inspiring ideas in Vedānta and *yoga*; and they are trying to understand man from a deeper dimension than what they have done till now. They had viewed man till

now only from the outside. That touched only his surface dimension. And in spite of all the current education based on that surface view of man and even the Freudian depth view of man is only a surface view from the point of view of the Indian depth study of man-in the West, the more educated means the more complex and unintegrated in mind. Simple minds are better than unintegrated complex minds; so that, the educated person is full of unintegrated energies within because he or she is merely strong intellectually. So even the late Bertrand Russell, a brilliant intellectual and not a man of religion but a thorough-going agnostic, said (*Impact of Science on Society*, p. 121):

Unless men increase in wisdom as much as in knowledge, increase of knowledge will be increase of sorrow.

What a beautiful idea! Now, the idea in this sentence is a modern echo of one of the great ideas in our ancient Upaniṣads. In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, seventh chapter, the opening passage presents us a highly educated student by name Nārada approaching a great spiritual teacher by name Sanatkumāra and saying to him: `O Blessed One, I am full of sorrow (in spite of all my intellectual knowledge); and I have heard from great teachers like you that he who knows his own infinite Self alone, and none else, can cross over sorrow. So, O Blessed One, please take me across this ocean of sorrow.' Then Sanatkumāra asks him: `Please tell me what you already know.' Nārada then enumerates a number of subjects which he has studied, including the Vedas, history and other positivistic sources of knowledge; and the teacher remarks: `Yes, you know much; but *nāmaiva tat*-`they are all mere words, words, words!' Education has to go beyond words to meaning, beyond knowledge to wisdom.

4.

Parā-Vidyā and Aparā-Vidyā

Now when you keep in the background what Bertrand Russell, echoing the deep-felt urges of the modern Western peoples, said, and then turn to the Upaniṣads, you find the same beautiful idea expressed in the same language, though Russell cannot help you to understand what is exactly meant by this `wisdom'. So Indian tradition upholds that these are the two types of knowledge for man to acquire: One is knowledge, the other is matured knowledge, when knowledge becomes wisdom. Science or knowledge is called *vidyā* in Sanskrit. In the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, Chapter One, there is this anecdote: A student goes to a teacher and asks him:

kasmin nu bhagavo vijñāte sarvam idaṁ vijñātam bhavati

What is that (truth), O Blessed One, by knowing which one can know everything in *this manifested* universe?

The word *idaṁ,* this, is a technical term in Sanskrit meaning this manifested universe which you experience as an object. Everything in this world including the body, sense organs, the sun, moon and stars, all these are denoted by the simple word *idaṁ, this*. The question is an

inquiry into the One behind the many. To this question comes a beautiful answer from the teacher:

wo kinds of science or knowledge are to be inquired into (by man), so say the sages who know (the truth of) Brahman, the Ultimate Reality; one is called *aparā-vidyā*, ordinary knowledge, the other is called *parā-vidyā*, higher knowledge.

Both are sciences, but the first deals with the world of change, with the *loka*, i.e. reality as revealed by the five senses and by instruments helpful to the senses; the other deals with what is the changeless, with the *lokātīta or lokottara*, i.e., reality that is transcendental, eternal, that lies beyond the reach of the senses and the sense-bound mind. All the sacred books of the world, the teacher means to say, like the Vedas, the Koran, the Bible, then astronomy, and othersciences, linguistics, grammar, etc.-in fact, all positivistic knowledge-belong to the category of *aparā-vidyā*.

5.

The Scientific Temper of the Indian Sages

The Upaniṣadic teacher is detached, scientific, and bold; he includes even the Vedas into this ordinary knowledge category, in spite of the high esteem in which these sacred books are held by him and his nation. What boldness, arising from single-minded love of truth and scientific detachment, you find in the thinking of these sages of the Upaniṣads! in no other religious tradition will you find this scientific temper and courage. One's own sacred book is always the highest to the followers of any religion. Not so to these Hindu sages. Even the sacred books to them are ordinary knowledge, *aparā-vidyā*. That this scientific temper is a hoary tradition in India is verified by what Sri Ramakrishna says in our own time: In the Vedas and other scriptures, you do not get God, but only information about God; they are just like the Hindu *pañjīkā* or calendar, which often contains forecast of the rainfall of the year-this year, there will be so many centimetres of rainfall. But, says, Sri Ramakrishna, if you squeeze the *pañjīkā*, you won't get a single drop of water! Likewise, if you squeeze the Vedas or other sacred books, you won't get that imperishable Reality, that *parā-vidyā* or wisdom, which the teacher in that Upaniṣad defines as: *yayā tadakṣaram adhigamyate*-`by which that imperishable Reality can be realised,' and which can be got only by squeezing your own experience, by inquiry into the depth-dimension of your personality. This kind of boldness arising from love of truth, which you saw in Sri Ramakrishna in our own time, was there in the philosophical and religious tradition of India from the time of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads, which exhort the seeker to go beyond even the Vedas. The Vedas themselves declare: *vedo avedo bhavati*-`(to the knower of Truth,) the Vedas become irrelevant'; the *Gītā* similarly declares in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's exhortations to Arjuna (II. 45):

***traiguṇya-viṣayā vedā nistraiguṇyo bhavārjuna*- the Vedas deal with the three guṇas; you go beyond the three *guṇas*, O Arjuna!**
Again (VI. 44):

***jijñāsurapi yogasya śabda-brahmāti-vartate*-even an inquirer into yoga goes beyond the (do's and dont's of the) Vedas.**

You transcend the scriptures, with their do's and don'ts, and all these static traditions, when you become an experimenter in the science of spirituality; and when you experience the truth for yourself, then alone do you attain to the knowledge of God, knowledge of the *akṣara*, the imperishable Reality, which is the subject of *parā-vidyā*, wisdom. Knowledge rising to wisdom is only when you begin to experience the profound truth about yourself, that behind and beyond these passing configurations of your psycho-physical individuality, you realize the one infinite imperishable Ātman.

6.

When All knowing tends to be Being

I wish to tell you the Vedāntic way of conveying this truth in one small sentence: In all scientific investigations into the inner dimension of man, which is also the inner dimension of nature-for man is nature's finest product of evolution-every knowing tends to be being; to know it, is to be it. In no physical science is this true. If you know the table, you don't become the table; when you know the sun, you don't become the sun. But in the science of the inner nature of man, when you know the Ātman, you become the Ātman, when you know God, you become God, or become God-like. What a beautiful idea! There you find speculative knowledge becoming experiential knowledge; this is what Vedānta calls knowledge maturing into wisdom.

Is there anything *akṣara*, imperishable, in this world of *kṣara* or perishable things? Is there anything permanent in this world of change? That is the constant scientific and philosophical question. In many Upaniṣads you come across this question and the way the sages investigated it and found the answer. In modern Western thought also, you come across this question. All science is the search for the imperishable behind the perishable, for the absolute behind the relative. What is the imperishable? Everything in the universe is perishable. So are our own bodies. Only through the pursuit of Truth into the depth level of experience, says Vedānta, will you get the imperishable and the immortal. You realize yourself as truly the immortal. I am not this body. This is changing; this is perishable. But I am the infinite *Ātman*; I am the Self; I am Śiva, I am Śiva! That wonderful knowledge is not second-hand knowledge but first-hand or direct experience. Here knowledge becomes experience. `There is the *Ātman* in me' is only an information. But `I am the *Ātman*' is an experience; and experience at the *parā* knowledge or trans-sensory knowledge level is what makes for wisdom.

7.

The Advaitic Vision in Vedānta and Modern Science

This is how the Upaniṣads describe this inquiry into the wonderful depth-nature of man,

which is also the depth-nature of the universe, for nature has a *within* dimension which is revealed in her highest evolutionary product, namely, man. This infinite Ātman is behind the whole universe as pure Consciousness; behind everything is an ocean of the energy of pure Consciousness-*parā-śakti*, *cit-śakti*, *cit-svarūpa*-these are the words you will find used in the *Devī-māhātmyam* and other Vedānta books. You will find therein God spoken of as the Divine Mother of the Universe, as the *Ādyā-śakti*, the Primordial Divine Energy, of the nature of pure Consciousness.

You will find many such beautiful and meaningful verses in these great Vedānta books. Therefore, on the one side, there is the imperishable Reality of pure and nondual Consciousness at the depth and, on the other side, there are these ever-changing perishable manifestations of that Reality on the surface. These are the two dimensions of reality; the latter belong to the world of the knowable *object*; the former belongs to the dimension of the knower, the *subject* of knowledge, in which, as said earlier, all knowledge ever consummates itself in being, in experience. In that experience, achieved in varying degrees, lies human wisdom and fulfilment. Even a glimpse of that truth, as the *Gītā* expresses it in its second chapter, confers great strength and fearless- ness-*svalpamapyasya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt*.

When you study physics of this twentieth century, you will find this Advaitic vision coming there once again. The universe of daily experience presents a vast diversity of apparently stable molecular structures; but when physics probes the universe deeper and deeper, it comes across an undifferentiated quantum energy field. There are both these-energy field below and the material molecular structures above. What is the nature of these two? Let Einstein speak (quoted in M. Capek: *The Philosophical Impact of Contemporary Physics*, p.319):

There is no place in this new kind of physics both for the field and matter, for the field is the only reality.

8.

Emerging Importance of the Datum of Consciousness in Modern Science

Vedānta uses the word consciousness-field in place of the physical energy-field of physics. To the question: What is the nature of that field? Vedānta gives the answer: It is pure consciousness. And today, even in nuclear physics, a little bit of this datum of consciousness is penetrating in its effort to interpret nuclear pheno-mena. In fact, when physics deals with nuclear phenomena, this subject of consciousness of the observer always comes up in trying to interpret the observed data. As physicist Eugene Wigner puts it (*Symmetries and Reflections*-Scientific Essays, p. 172):

It was not possible to formulate the laws (of quantum theory) in a fully consistent way without reference to consciousness.
Nuclear phenomena are altered by the very act of observation by the observer, so that the

word `observer' has become insufficient and a more meaningful word, *participator*, has been suggested by physicist John Wheeler (Quoted in *The Physicists' conception of Nature*, edited by J. Mehra, p. 244):

Nothing is more important about the quantum principle than this that it destroys the concept of the world as `sitting out there', with the observer safely separated from it by a 20 centimetre slab of plate glass. Even to observe so miniscule an object as an electron, he must shatter the glass. He must reach in. He must install his chosen measuring equipment. It is up to him to decide whether he shall measure position or momentum. To install the equipment to measure the one prevents and excludes his installing the equipment to measure the other. Moreover, the measurement changes the state of the electron. The universe will never afterwards be the same. To describe what has happened, one has to cross out that old word `observer', and put in its place the new word `participator.' In some strange sense, the universe is a participatory universe.

Now, I am only pointing out this unique and revolutionary situation in modern physics in order to show that, at the farthest reach of modern physical science, it is coming in touch with a new dimension of reality, namely, consciousness. And physics, or science in general, can't ignore it hereafter. Today, you have to reckon with it. And in Indian thought, in our Vedānta, we did this ages ago; we discovered that the whole universe is but ever-changing waves and waves in an infinite and nondual Consciousness-field.

This then is the new situation in the world of science, in the world of knowledge, so that even from the point of view of physical science, our concept of education must take into account not only the observed external world but also the observer's inner world, something deep within man himself.

9.

Consciousness versus Objectivity in Modern Science

Tracing the early benefits which physical science derived from excluding the everpresent datum of consciousness, the datum of the subject, the datum of the observer, from its investigation of nature in the interest of objectivity, and pointing out the compulsions, arising from twentieth-century science, to give that datum its due status, nuclear scientist Erwin Schrodinger says (*What is life?* and *Mind and Matter*, pp.127-128):

Without being aware of it, and without being rigorously systematic about it, we exclude the subject of cognizance from the domain of nature that we endeavour to understand. We step with our own person back into the part of an onlooker who does not belong to the world which, by this very procedure, becomes an objective world.....

For the moment let me just mention the two most blatant antinomies due to our unawareness of the fact that a moderately satisfying picture of the world has only been reached at the high price of taking ourselves out of the picture, stepping back into the role of

a non-concerned observer.

The first of these antinomies is the astonishment at finding our world picture `colourless, cold, mute.' Colour and sound, hot and cold are our immediate sensations; small wonder that they are lacking in a world model from which we have removed our own mental person.

The second is our fruitless quest for the place where mind acts on matter or *vice versa*, so well known from Sir Charles Sherrington's honest search, magni-ficently expounded in *Man on His Nature*. The material world has only been constructed at the price of taking the self, that is, mind, out of it, removing it.....

While I continue to regard the removal of the subject of cognizance from the objective world picture as the high price paid for a fairly satisfactory picture, for the time being, Jung goes further and blames us for paying this ransom from an inextricably difficult situation. He says (*Eranos Jahrbuch*, p. 398):

`All science (Wissenschaft,) however, is a function of the soul, in which all knowledge is rooted. The soul is the greatest of all cosmic miracles, it is the *conditio sine qua non* of the world as an object. It is exceedingly astonishing that the western world (apart from very rare exceptions) seems to have so little appreciation of this being so. The flood of external objects of cognizance has made the subject of all cognizance withdraw to the background, often to apparent non-existence.'

Describing this as an impasse, Schrodinger says (*ibid*., pp. 131-32):

`Mind has erected the objective outside world of the natural philosopher out of its own stuff. Mind could not cope with this gigantic task otherwise than by the simplifying device of excluding itself-withdrawing from its conceptual creation. Hence the latter does not contain its creator.'

I cannot convey the grandeur of Sherrington's immortal book by quoting sentences; one has to read it oneself. Still, I will mention a few of the more particularly characteristic (*Man on His Nature*, p. 222 and p. 232):

`Physical science.....faces us with the impasse that mind *per se* cannot play the piano-mind *per se* cannot move a finger of a hand.

`Then the impasse meets us. The blank of the `how' of mind's leverage on matter. The inconsequence staggers us. Is it a misunderstanding?.....'

10.

Unity of Subject and Object

Schrodinger continues *(ibid)*:

The impasse *is* an impasse. Are we thus not the doers of our deeds? Yet we feel responsible for them, we are punished or praised for them, as the case may be. It is a horrible antinomy. I maintain that it cannot be solved on the level of present-day science which is still entirely engulfed in the `exclusion principle'- without knowing it-hence the antinomy. To realize this is valuable, but it does not solve the problem. You cannot remove the `exclusion principle' by act of parliament, as it were. Scientific attitude would have to be rebuilt, science must be made anew. Care is needed.....

And offering an *advaitic* suggestion to resolve the impasse, he concludes (*ibid*, pp. 134-37):

As an appendix to these considerations, those strongly interested in the physical sciences might wish to hear me pronounce on a line of ideas, concerning subject and object, that has been given great prominence by the prevailing school of thought in quantum physics, the protagonists being Niels Bohr, Werner Heisenberg, Max Born, and others. Let me first give you a very brief description of their ideas.....

We are given to understand that we never observe an object without its being modified or tinged by our own activity in observing it. We are given to understand that, under the impact of our refined methods of observation and of thinking about the results of our experiments, that mysterious boundary between the subject and the object has broken down.....

***Subject and object are only one*. The barrier between them cannot be said to have broken down as a result of recent experience in the physical sciences, *for, this barrier does not exist*. (italics not by Schrodinger)**

11.

The Ultimate Reality in Vedānta: Its All-Comprehending Dimension

What is that unity of subject and object? It is here that our Upaniṣads have blazed a trail ages ago. I can definitely tell you that many modern Western scientists say: we respect the Vedas, we respect the Upaniṣads. Harvard University astronomer the late Harlow Shapley told me so personally. The famous book *Tao of Physics* of Fritjof Capra-we had met at lunch at our Vedanta Society of Berkeley, U.S.A. in 1976-quotes several passages from the Upaniṣads; here is one from chapter 4 of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (p. 87):

That which is the finest essence-this whole world has that as its soul. That is Reality. That is Ātman. That Thou art.

He quotes this and other Upaniṣadic passages with great approval; and he says that the Ultimate Reality taught in physical science is far limited compared to the most comprehensive Ultimate Reality taught in Vedānta (*ibid*., p. 211):

The *Brahman* of the Hindus, like the *Dharmakāya* of the Buddhists and the *Tao* of the Taoists, can be seen, perhaps, as the ultimate unified field, from which spring not only the

phenomena studied in physics, but all other phenomena as well.

In the Eastern view, the reality underlying all phenomena is beyond all forms and defies all description and specification. It is therefore often said to be formless, empty, or void. But this emptiness is not be taken for mere nothingness. It is, on the contrary, the essence of all forms and the source of all life. Thus the Upaniṣads say (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 4.10.4):

***Brahman* is life. *Brahman* is joy. *Brahman* is the Void.....joy, verily, that is the same as the Void. The Void, verily, that is the same as joy.**

If, therefore, Vedānta is more comprehensive than physical science, India's concept of education, which is the same thing as `Swami Vivekananda's concept of education', is more comprehensive than modern education and is best defined in Swamiji's own words (*Complete Works*, Vol. V, p. 366, seventh edition):

What we want are Western science coupled with Vedānta, with *brahmacarya* as the guiding motto, and also *śraddhā* and faith in one's ownself.

Education so defined has the strength of a unifying philosophy behind it encompassing nature and man, and discovering behind both the presence of the Divine, the Infinite, and the Immortal. That truth is what is conveyed by the first verse of the first Upniṣad, the *Īśā Upaniṣad*:

All this manifested universe should be seen as filled with the Divine-*īśāvāsyam idam sarvam*.

In everything, even in the atom, in the beam of the sun, in all creature-everywhere-you will find, if you plunge deep into the ocean of existence, say the Upaniṣads, the presence of that infinite Consciousness-field, the Ātman. That is your true nature-*Tat tvam asi*-`That thou art'; you are not the tiny psycho-physical entity that your senses and sense-bound mind report about you; there is something infinite about you; try to realize it, and bring its pure and infinite energy resources to enrich and stabilise your outer life and inter-human relationships.

This is the basis and direction of the Upaniṣadic concept of education; and let me tell you that many scientists, when they come in touch with these profound ideas of the Upaniṣads, become simply charmed, simply inspired. I like to share with you another passage from Erwin Schrodinger who strongly upholds the Vedāntic truth of the unity and non-duality of Consciousness which Śaṅkarācārya had proclaimed as their greatest teaching (Introduction to *Brahma-Sūtra* Commentary):

***ātmaikatva-vidyāpratipattaye sarve vedāntā ārabhyante*-`all Vedāntas (i.e. the Upaniṣads) endeavour to realize the truth of the Unity of the Ātman.'**

Consciousness is never experienced in the plural, only in the singular.....Consciousness is singular of which the plural is unknown; that there *is* only one thing and that, what seems to be a plurality is merely a series of different aspects of this one thing, produced by a deception

(The Indian Māyā). *(What is Life?* and *Mind and Matter*, pp.94-95)

In this connection, it will be instructive to hear also the following concluding words of his lecture on *Unity and Diversity of Life* by another scientist, the great molecular biologist late Professor J. B. S. Haldane (quoted by R. B. Lal in *Gītā in the Light of Modern Science*, p. 25):

On the walls of the large room in the zoological laboratory at Munster, where professor Rensch keeps his living animals, are written the words: *tat tvam asi* (`That infinite and pure *Ātman* thou art'). If I have helped any of you to understand some of the implications of this great saying, my lectures have not been in vain.

12.

The Impact of the Advaitic Vision on Education

When they come in touch with this profound Vedāntic science of man in depth, these creators and representatives of twentieth-century science simply stand in admiration and appreciation: what a wonderful vision of man! Man as the Immortal Self, ever pure, ever free! Vedānta proclaims that in the Ātman alone is freedom, and in freedom alone is human dignity, fearlessness, peace, love and fulfilment.

This is the profound truth which helped ancient India to develop an education which did not make any distinction between physical science and the science of spirituality. According to the accepted Indian tradition, the goddess presiding over every type of science or knowledge is one, namely, *Sarasvatī*. She presides over *aparā-vidyā* as much as *parā-vidyā;* she presides over the physical sciences, all the technical professions including medical and engineering, all arts and crafts, and also over all higher spiritual knowledge. This has been the age-old concept of the unity of all knowledge in India.

The present division between the secular and thesacred is a new superstition, not warranted by theUpaniṣads and the central Indian tradition; the acquisition of knowledge is a continuous process. A baby is born absolutely innocent of conscious knowledge; then it looks around; it experiences the pouring in of diverse impressions into its sensory apparatus from the outer world; its reaction to this is, initially, a sense of puzzle and mystery, expressing in an inchoate question: What is this outer world into which I have been ushered from out of the sheltered world of my mother's womb? Always you can see this sense of puzzle and mystery in the eyes of a newborn baby; and, gently it probes that outer world and tries to understand it and have a grip on it. In the words of William James, the famous American philosopher and psychologist: To a new-born baby the world is a buzzing booming confusion! Out of that confusion, the baby creates knowledge, by observation, classification of data, and acquisition of control over that external world-first incoherently and haltingly and, later, as an adult and as a scientist, coherently, steadily, and efficiently. At a later stage of this search, as an adult who has become dissatisfied with the childish toys of material wealth and organic satisfactions, man becomes confronted by a greater mystery, namely, himself, and continues his scientific search for truth from the outer physical nature, from the *without* of nature, into

the remarkable mystery of man himself- into the *within* dimension of nature as revealed in nature's highest evolutionary product, namely, man.

It is this second mystery emerging at the frontiers of physical science that is intriguing several modern scientists. Says Lincoln Barnett *(The Universe and Dr.Einstein*, Mentor Edition, pp. 126-27):

In the evolution of scientific thought one fact has become impressively clear; there is no mystery of the physical world which does not point to a mystery beyond itself. All highroads of intellect, all byways of theory and conjecture, lead ultimately to an abyss that human ingenuity can never span. For man is enchained by the very condition of his being, his finiteness and involvement in nature. The farther he extends his horizons, the more vividly he recognizes the fact that, as the physicist Niels Bohr puts it, `We are both spectators and actors in the great drama of existence.'

Man is thus his own greatest mystery. He does not understand the vast veiled universe into which he has been cast for the reason that he does not understand himself. He comprehends but little of his organic processes, and even of his unique capacity to perceive the world about him, to reason and to dream. Least of all does he understand his noblest and most mysterious faculty: the ability to transcend himself and perceive himself in the act of perception.

Swami Vivekananda has given expression to hisideas on education lucidly and comprehensively. Introducing the Swami's small book *Education*, Mahatma Gandhi writes:

Surely, Vivekananda's words do not need introduction from anybody; they make their own irresistible appeal.

Yours,
Bapu.

13.
Vivekananda's Discipleship under Sri Ramakrishna: Its Wider Significance for all Education

How could Swamiji speak with such `irresistible appeal' on education? The answer lies in his own experience of education and its comprehensive nature. He had studied the modern sciences, history, and literature, with keen interest, while he was at school and college; earlier, he had imbibed at his mother's feet the spiritual and cultural traditions of his own ancient country. But by these alone his education was not complete. This educated Narendra had to go and sit at the feet of an `uneducated' man-the great Sri Rama-krishna (1836-1886)- for five years, to complete his education and emerge as Swami Vivekananda! What a strange spectacle is this anecdote in the modern age! Highly educated and intellectual, not only he, but also several other similar youths, had to approach the `uneducated' Sri Ramakrishna living in Dakshineswar, north Calcutta, to continue and complete their education. Who was this Sri Ramakrishna? He had never gone to school beyond the first or second year of the primary level. He was just ordinary; and yet he was also something extraordinary; for he had

given himself an education in what I had earlier referred to as the *parā-vidyā* of the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*; and they all found fulfilment of their education in him.

***Aparā-vidyā* was represented by Narendra and other young disciples, while Sri Ramakrishna represented *parā-vidyā*. And the modern age re-experienced, what ancient India had always upheld, the extraordinary spectacle of *aparā-vidyā* going to *parā-vidyā* to fulfil itself. This confirmed three truths which the Indian tradition has always held fast to during the several millennia of her history, in contrast to the opposite experience of the 2500 years of the Western tradition:**

1. *Aparā-vidyā* must rise to the level of *parā-vidyā* to fulfil itself-knowledge must rise to wisdom;

2. There is an unbroken continuity in human education from *aparā-vidyā* to *parā-vidyā;*

3. *Parā-vidyā* and *aparā-vidyā* are complementary and never contradictory.

14.
Arnold Toynbee on the Significance of SriRamakrishna for the Modern Age

Here we can trace the spiritual and cultural continuity from the ancient Upaniṣads to modern Sri Ramakrishna. There is an intimacy and complementarity between Narendra and Sri Ramakrishna; Sri Rama-krishna welcomes and Narendra responds. Many great writers today have referred to Sri Ramakrishna as the salvation for this age. How strange such a suggestion appears-the man who was uneducated going to save the highly educated and intellectual modern age! What is the truth in such a statement? The truth is that Sri Ramakrishna gives you knowledge of your own true nature as the ever-pure, ever-free, and ever-luminous *Ātman.* This truth, this knowledge the hunger and search for it, is entirely missing in modern education.

Arnold Toynbee, author of the 10-volume *Study of History* and *A Historian's Approach to Religion*, presents Sri Ramakrishna to modern man in this very role (Foreward to *Sri Ramakrishna and His Unique Message* of Swami Gahanananda):

Sri Ramakrishna's message was unique in being expressed in action. The message itself was perennial of Hinduism, as Swami Ghanananda points out. Hinduism, as unique among the historic higher religions in holding that neither Hinduism nor any other religion is a unique representation of the truth or a unique way of salvation.

Ramakrishna made his appearance and delivered his message at the time and the place at which he and his message was needed. The message could hardly have been delivered by anyone who had not been brought up in the Hindu religious tradition.... Today we are still living in this transitional chapter of the world's history; but it is already becoming clear that a chapter which had a Western beginning will have to have an Indian ending, if it is not to end in the self-destruction of the human race.

In the present age, the world has been united on the material plane by Western technology. But this Western skill has not only `annihilated distance'; it has armed the peoples of the world with weapons of devastating power at a time when they have been brought to point-blank range of each other, without yet having learnt to know and love each other. At this supremely dangerous moment in human history, the only way of salvation for mankind is an Indian way. The emperor Ashoka's and Mahatma Gandhi's principle of non-violence and Sri Ramakrishna' testimony to the harmony of religions; here we have the attitude and the spirit that can make it possible for the human race to grow together into a single family and, in the atomic age, this is the only alternative to destroying ourselves.

15.

`Hear, Ye Children of Immortal Bliss!'

It is the vision, which Sri Ramakrishna embodied in himself and which Swami Vivekananda assimilated sitting at his feet and which he, later on, presented at the Chicago World Parliament of Religions, that should become the foundation and core of all education. In thatpresentation, Swamiji said (*Complete Works*, Vol.I, pp. 10-11):

Is man a tiny boat in a tempest, raised one moment on the foamy crest of a billow and dashed down into a yawning chasm the next, rolling to and fro at the mercy of good and bad actions-a powerless, helpless wreck in an ever-raging, ever-rushing, uncompromising current of cause and effect; a little moth placed under the wheel of causation which rolls on crushing everything in its way and waits not for the widow's tears or the orphan's wails?

The heart sinks at the idea, yet this is the law of Nature. Is there no hope? Is there no escape?-was the cry that went up from the bottom of the heart of despair. It reached the throne of mercy, and words of hope and consolation came down and inspired a Vedic sage, and he stood up before the world and in trumpet voice proclaimed the glad tidings (*Śvetāśvatara-Upaniṣad*, 2.6 and3.8):

Hear, ye children of immortal bliss! even ye that reside in higher spheres! I have found the Ancient One who is beyond all darkness, all delusion: knowing Him alone you shall be saved from death over again.

Children of immortal bliss-what a sweet, what a hopeful name! Allow me to call you, brethren, by that sweet name-heirs of immortal bliss-ye, the Hindu refuses to call you sinners. Ye are the Children of God, the sharers of immortal bliss, holy and perfect beings. Ye divinities on earth-sinners! It is a sin to call a man so; it is a standing libel on human nature. Come up, Olions, and shake off the delusion that you are sheep; you are souls immortal, spirits free, blest and eternal; ye are not matter, ye are not bodies; matter is your servant, not you the servant of matter.

Romain Rolland remarks this about the lectures of Vivekananda at the Parliament (*Life of*

***Vivekānanda*, p. 42):**

Each time he repeated with new arguments, but with the same force of conviction, his thesis of a universal religion without limit of time or space, uniting the whole *credo* of the human spirit, from the enslaved fetishism of the savage to the most liberal creative affirmations of modern science. He harmonised them into a magnificent synthesis which, far from extinguishing the hope of a single one, helped all hopes to grow and flourish according to their own proper nature. There was to be no other dogma but the divinity inherent in man and his capacity for indefinite evolution.

16.

Education as All-round Human Growth

Herein is the very soul of human education; and its greatest emphasis is on all-round growth, physical, mental, and spiritual. After all the education you have undergone, you ask yourself the question: `Have I grown spiritually?' You may have grown intellectually, you may have grown physically. But have you grown spiritually? Your education is satisfactory only when you answer: `I have put myself, and taken the first few steps, on the long road of my spiritual growth.' Then alone is your education worthwhile. It will make for human fulfilment, individual and collective; otherwise, we shall move from one tension to another, from one distortion to another; and human problems will only multiply all the time.

This higher dimension of education finds endorsement, in twentieth-century biology, in its emphasis on fulfilment as the goal of evolution at the human level and the replacement of quantity, the criterion of evolution at the pre-human levels, to quality at the human stage. In the nineteenth-century biology, on the other hand, the goal of evolution was defined as organic satisfaction, physical survival, and numerical increase; but these are now relegated as secondary at the human stage, and fulfilment and qualitative richness are treated as primary.

Education today must help the student to ask the question and find the answer to: What is the quality of your life, since quantity has become secondary and subordinate to quality, at the human level? As emphasised by Sir Julian Huxley in the course of his keynote lecture on `The Evolutionary Vision' given at the Chicago University Congress of Scientists celebrating Darwin Centenary (*Evolution after Darwin*, Vol. III, p. 257):

I spoke of quality. This must be the dominant concept of our new belief-system-quality and richness as against quantity and uniformity.

And discussing the subject of material utility inthe light of this belief-system, Huxley says (*ibid*., p. 259):

Once we truly believe.....that man's destiny is to make possible greater fulfilment for human beings and fuller achievement by human societies, utility in the customary sense becomes subordinate. Quantity of material production is, of course, necessary as the basis for the

satisfaction of elementary human needs-but only up to a certain degree. More than a certain number of calories or cocktails or TV Sets or washing machines per person is not merely unnecessary, but bad. Quantity of material production is a means to a further end, not an end in itself.

And highlighting quality as the dynamics of evolution, Huxley concludes (*ibid*., pp. 260-61):

Thus the evolutionary vision.....illumines our existence in a simple, but almost overwhelming way.....It shows us our destiny and our duty. It shows us mind enthroned above matter, quantity subordinate to quality.

The West is showing today the evil effects of the dominance of quantity over quality; and the same is spreading to India and other countries due to the high prestige of the modern West. When I mention these distortions of modern civilization during my lectures and discussions in the universities in the West, I am sometimes asked by some defenders of the current Western civilization in the audience: What about the poor people sleeping on the pavements of the Calcutta streets? I gently reply: they at least sleep well on the pavements, whereas many people in our highly developed societies, though living in palatial residences, do not often enjoy natural sleep! Of course, We do not want people to be poor, hungry, and homeless. We need scientific and technical developments to make all our people to live decent human lives. And that calls for the spread of secular education and economic development. But this quantity improvement must lead to quality improvement. It is this vital need that lies behind Swami Vivekananda's constant stress on the need to combine, in education all over the world, the physical sciences with the science of spirituality.

17.

Conclusion: Education to be a Synthesis of Learning to Do and Learning to Be

One word more; some years ago, the UNESCO appointed a commission of enquiry on education in the post-War world. The French Education Minister of the time, who became also the Prime-Minister later, M.Edgar Faure, was the Chairman of that Commission. It issued a report bearing a significant title: *Learning to Be*. Till now, the only stress in education is learning to do. How can I become a doctor, a lawyer, an engineer, or any other sort of social functionary? This is learning to do. Yes, we shall continue to stress the learning to do ideas and techniques; but the report emphasises that the main stress in education should be learning to be. Learning to do is included in *learning to be*. And when you deal with `learning to be', you come to this subject of man in depth-the great science of *adhyātma-vidyā*.

Thus we get an education in which the physical and social sciences and the science of man in depth go hand in hand, under the philosophy of a comprehensive spirituality which is the theme of the *yoga* of the *Gītā.* From the Indian point of view, I repeat, and let all our people realize it today, there is never any conflict between the two dimensions of science, namely, aparā and parā. This is the Indian approach to the subject of human education with a view to ensuring total human fulfilment, individual and collective. This is the rational strength and

conviction, and contemporary relevance, behind Swami Vivekananda's ideas and ideals of education and religion. These are bound to receive increasing welcome and implementation in due course by thinking minds in India and the rest of the world.

Modern Education: A Synthesis of Science and Vedānta

Swami Adidevananda

Glancing over the recent past we find that sciencehas made great advances in all departments ofknowledge. Studying external nature physics has familiarized us with the concepts of spiral nebulae and a single space-time continuum. Scrutinizing the structure of `matter' it has made known the quantum theory, nature of radioactive substances and the structure of atoms. These and other similar new items of scientific knowledge have begun to affect profoundly some of our fundamental conceptions. It may be permitted to mention that the effect of these new concepts upon orthodox philosophical tenets has been disastrous. Descartes and Spinoza, Kant and Hegel can no more claim sole intellectual allegiance from thoughtful people. It is an age of intellectual confusion, with the prospect of a broader and clearer horizon.

It seems natural under the circumstances that there is among some modern philosophers a readiness to adapt themselves to the new intellectual atmosphere; for they cannot fail to note that the edifice of old philosophy is collapsing without the support of science. So in the light of the new discoveries of science, they endeavour to subsume under the term philosophy notions which it did not originally convey. Unfortunately this attempt does not hold much promise. Perhaps time will bring forth another Copernican revolution in which science may show a different picture of the universe other than that today. Then people will again clamour for a new philosophy which is based on the fresh materials then unearthed by science. This philosophy-making process may go on *ad infinitum*. Thus it seems this philosophical approach to Truth will land us in uncertainty and constant shifting if we follow science thoughtlessly. Between the position of shifting philo- sophy and stagnant orthodox doctrines, Vedānta comes to our rescue.

What are the special claims of Vedānta over the discoveries of new science and conclusions of the old philosophies? J. Arthur Thompson defines science as `the complete and consistent description of the facts of experience in the simplest possible term.'

While science acquires, describes and analyzes facts of experience with a view to find out the uniformity of behaviour, philosophy attempts to reflect upon the universe as a whole, particularly as to its purpose and value. `The function of science is to answer the question ``what?'' ', writes Prof. W. T. Stace, `but never the question ``why?'' '. In other words, its function is simply to describe phenomena, never to explain them. There emerges from what has been said that on this premise the conception of reality arrived at will be no more than a construct of our mind. This cannot be otherwise, since objects are known to us only through our senses and are perceived only by our minds. The attempts of science and philosophy are

doomed to sterility in the ultimate explanation of reality as they have no extra-sensory means of attaining knowledge.

When science fails to give a unified understanding of the universe, Vedānta comes forward and secures a perfect unity between the individual and the universe by introducing a direct relation. The purpose of Vedānta is peace, unity and salvation. It is based on a profound intuitional (immediate insight transcending reason) feeling of the highest value. It is the Divinity within man uniting to the Divinity beyond. It takes us up into the Himalayan-top and throws shafts of revealing light upon many a dark corner.

There are two pictures of the universe-the old universe of common sense and a new universe of science. One has an apparent reality; the other has a reality acceptable to the scientist. Let us take up the first aspect and see what it reveals. There are solid objects around us with weight, shape and colour. The cycle of seasons revolves in regular succession; and day after day we see the sun rising in the east and setting in the west. We receive various sensations according to the nature of the objects; some of them pleasant and others unpleasant. In this aspect we have no fusion of space and time in a unitary concept.

Now let us consider the aspect of universe as revealed by new science. It was discovered that, underlying the solid world as we see it in ordinary life, there was another world revealed through telescope, microscope and other instruments. There are two ultimate substances, namely, positive and negative electricity. Each of these consists of a number of minute particles similar in nature: the positive particle is called proton, the negative the electron. The results of profound and intricate researches show that Space and Time are more closely related to each other than we imagine. There is no space with three dimensions and Time with one, but Space-Time with four dimensions.

Time was when people thought that scientists had given the final solution for all their problems. But a critical student of Vedānta does not stop until he intuits the Reality which is something absolute and ultimate. The oldest of philosophical problems still remains unanswered. What is Reality? What, after all, is an electron?

A scientist may brand the world of common sense as mere illusion, and similarly an old-fashioned philosopher may describe the world of science as objectionable nonsense. It is difficult to say which reality is ultimate and `the thing-in-itself'. Why should the world of ordinary experience be regarded as unreal even if the solid objects are composed of electrons and protons? Why should the electron be regarded as real when the scientist cannot explain its behaviour? If a child swallows a coin it is not possible for us to see it with our own eyes how the coin is stuck up in the stomach; the stomach-wall is an actual barrier between our retina and the coin. But X-Rays can penetrate the stomach as if there is no barrier. What is not impervious to X-Rays is solid to human eyes. Similarly what are illusions and hallucinations to some are realities for others. If there is only one correct means for knowing the things, why this mutual contradiction?

It is possible for Vedānta, which is based on the eternal values, to solve this mystery of man

and the universe. The pictures of the universe as revealed by Physics, Psychics and ordinary life touch only a fringe of the Reality. Each of them presents a reality within its own limitation. Vedāntic intuition, which is beyond the framework of the human mind confers upon these aspects a kind of relative reality. To Vedāntins even the space-time continuum is within the great nescience. As long as we think within the capacity of human mind we have to grasp only those aspects which are within space and time. As soon as we transcend the limitations of our mind, the picture of our naive common sense as well as the picture of science become mere phantoms.

No theory of physical and chemical sciences help us in solving the vexed problem of life and death. A physiologist cannot see anything more than a colloidal compound which, to him, represents a chemical basis of life. (Sic! if they know the chemical composition of a dead cell why do they not resurrect it?) Biology describes how a simple fertilised germ cell divides and proliferates. But Embryology fails to answer what force in the cell makes it divide and develop. It is true that the Absolute of Vedānta is incomprehensible to the human mind. But the Vedāntic intuition as understood from the Pisgah-heights of highest wisdom explains many mysteries of our existence. Vedāntic thinkers find it an utter absurdity to explain life on mechanical basis. How can the causality based on the configuration of physical and chemical substances account for the organic development? The Absolute of Vedānta is the Intelligence and Creative Power of the universe. It is the *elan*, subtler than the subtlest, and enters into everything as the evolutionary urge. Rightly an Upaniṣadic text declares: `He desired, may I be many, may I grow forth..... Having sent forth he entered it. Having entered it he became Sat and Tat, defined and undefined, supported and non-supported, knowledge and non-knowledge, real and unreal.' Sir Arthur Thompson says that `it is difficult to think of the germ-cell, of higher animal at least, as being without its psychical aspect. Unless we think of ``the mind'' as entering in at a later stage in development, the germ-cell must have a dim primordium of a subjective, the promise and potency of mentality.' In the utlimate analysis of Vedānta there is no reality of mind and matter. Everything is the expression of one indivisible Reality.

As science is materialistic whose purpose is pure theory subordinated to economic end, and philosophy based upon that is bound to be materialistic. What is wanted is not a reconstruction of science, but a progress of it, a progress not in the form of mere acquisition of facts or formulation of laws, but in the form of a comprehension of the eternal values. For now, as in the past, man wants to know Reality. Centuries ago before Christ, the Vedāntic seers realized the Truth underlying all the apparent manifestations of mind and matter.

Another point of interest is that many scientists headed by Einstein and Max Planck are unwilling to accept the philosophy of indeterminism. In their world every event is determined by causal succession of previous events. All phenomena are subjected to the law of causality. May becomes absolutely powerless like a cog in the wheel, as all his actions are predetermined by the prior causes. This law has been challenged by many scientists (Eddington and Niels Bohr) who have propounded a `principle of indeterminism' and hold that chance reigns in nature. In Vedānta free will is not an illusion, but on the contrary, a necessary postulate for all human actions. Man is the architect of his own destiny; he is

subject to causality insofar as he is determined by the consequence of his own actions. It is no wonder that man has creative freedom in the Vedāntic scheme as the ultimate goal of his life is the manifestation of Divinity within.

Vedānta is the eternal goal of realized Truth. The votaries of science also are seeking to understand Truth though their attention is riveted for the time being on the minutiae of the immediate frontiers of their endeavour. Though the method of science remains a theory, the day is surely not far off when the scientists may take a plunge in the unchartered seas of intuitional realization. As Emerson puts it, `Under every deep, a lower deep opens.' The gulf between science and philosophy can only be bridged when both of them enable man to participate in the eternal through the knowledge of the Spirit. Thus, the acquiring of Vedāntic knowledge becomes the ultimate philosophic endeavour to which all other aims of man are merely subsidiary, and the paramount value to which all other values are subordinated.

Educational Philosophy of Swami Vivekananda

Swami Bhajanananda

Our Degradation-Its Cause and Remedy

Swami Vivekananda had diagnosed the main malady of India, and had found out its cause: the neglect of the masses. He knew the remedy also which lay in the application of the principles of religion and science in the day-to-day lives of the people. When he was wandering all over India, Swamiji was constantly asking himself: But how to put this into practice on a national scale? How to bring the life-giving principle of Vedānta to the doors of the masses? How to rouse in them self-confidence, strength, spiritual power, social awareness and the spirit of sacrifice? How to bring home to them the importance of scientific attitude in practical life without injuring their religious life? Above all, how to get food for the hungry millions? And the answer that he got was, `education'. He discovered that the collective consciousness of the people must be remoulded through education.

The solution is so simple that many people in India may not be convinced about its success. For the last twenty-five years the education of our children has been so neglected, and constant tinkering with educational experiments has created such a mess, that it is really difficult to believe that we can achieve our goals through education at all. But if we think a little deeply, we find that there is no other way out for us. In totalitarian countries the powerful state machinery swings into ruthless action and socio-economic changes are quickly accomplished. But in a democratic set-up as obtained in our country, we have to raise the nation slowly by training our young boys and girls in a proper way to shoulder the heavy responsibilities of reshaping the national character. The importance of education in transforming democratic societies has been pointed out by the distinguished philosopher and educationist John Dewey, who said: `I believe that education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform.'

Speaking about the importance of education in the upliftment of the masses Swamiji has

said:

Education, education, education alone! Travelling through many cities of Europe and observing in them the comforts and education of even the poor people, there was brought to my mind the state of our own poor people, and I used to shed tears. What made the difference? Education was the answer I got. Through education comes faith in one's own Self and through faith in one's own Self the inherent *Brahman* is waking up in them, while the *Brahman* in us is gradually becoming dormant. In New York I used to observe the Irish colonists come-downtrodden, haggard-looking, destitute of all possessions at home, penniless, and wooden-headed-with their only belongings, a stick and a bundle of rags hanging at the end of it, fright in their steps, alarm in their eyes. A different spectacle in six months-the man walks upright, his attire is changed! In his eyes and steps there is no more sign of fright. What is the cause? Our Vedānta says that that Irishman was kept surrounded by contempt in his own country-the whole of nature was telling him with one voice, `Pat, you have no more hope, you are born a slave and will remain so.' Having been thus told from his birth, Pat believed in it and hypnotized himself that he was very low, and the *Brahman* in him shrank away. While no sooner had he landed in America than he heard the shout going up on all sides, `Pat, you are a man as we are. It is man who has done all, a man like you and me can do everything: have courage!' Pat raised his head and saw that it was so. the *Brahman* within woke up. Nature herself spoke, as it were, `Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached.' [1]

From the day when education, culture, etc. began to spread gradually from patricians to plebeians, grew the distinction between the modern civilization as of Western countries and the ancient civilization as of India, Egypt, Rome, etc. I see it before my eyes, a nation is advanced in proportion as education and intelligence spread among the masses. The chief cause of India's ruin has been the monopolizing of the whole education and intelligence of the land, by dint of pride and royal authority, among a handful of men. If we are to rise again, we shall have to do it in the same way, i.e. by spreading education among the masses.[2]

My idea is to bring to the door of the meanest, the poorest, the noble ideas that the human race has developed both in and out of India, and let them think for themselves.[3]

Swamiji's plan for educating the masses must beconsidered under two headings; Theoretical and Practical.

1.
Theoretical: under this we have to consider five aspects:

(i)

Swamiji's Theory of Education

In Europe where the process of educating the masses, first initiated by the Christian church, has been going on for centuries, a number of great thinkers have tried to reform educational

techniques. One of the earliest among them was the German philosopher and educationist J. F. Herbart who said that the aim of education should be the development of moral character. And he developed a technique of curriculum based education, in which the teacher tried to create in the student *interest* in the different subjects. Herbart was followed by Froebel who shifted the emphasis from curriculum to the child. The goal of education became not knowledge but self-realization by which was meant the attainment of fulfilment through the development of human faculties. According to Froebel, knowledge cannot be put into the child; it can only grow with the child's activity. Froebel was the originator of the Kindergarten. His ideas were further developed by Pestalozzi and Maria Montessori until the great American philosopher and educationist John Dewey came on the scene with his doctrine `Education is life itself.' According to Dewey education is the process of unfolding the nature and capacities of the child.

It is in the context of these ideas of modern educationists that we should understand the importance of Swamiji's ideas on education. The key to his doctrines lies in his famous definition of education: `Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man.' Here Swamiji identified education with life itself long before Dewey propounded a similar theory. But Swamiji's theory of education goes far deeper than that of Froebel, Dewey and other modern educationists. According to these thinkers, a child is not an inert thing, nor his mind a *`tabula rasa.'* A child has impulses, predispositions, a capacity to assimilate and grow, and in the process, these bring out its hidden abilities and talents. Swamiji's ideas are in agreement with his view. He gives the example of a plant. What we can do about speeding up the growth of the plant is to provide it with water and manure, but the plant itself has to assimilate these and grow. Swamiji has said:

A child teaches itself. But you can *help* it to go forward in its own way. What you can do is not of the positive nature, but of the negative. You can take away the obstacles, but knowledge comes out of its own nature. Loosen the soil a little, so that it may come out easily. Put a hedge round it; so that it is not killed by anything, and there your work stops. You cannot do anything else. The rest is manifestation from within its own nature. So with the education of a child. A child educates itself.[4]

The problem of education is closely linked with our concept of human nature. It is here that Swamiji differs form the modern educationists, who limit man to the psycho-physical level. Swamiji dives deeper into the human personality. For him the real nature of man is Pure Consciousness; mind and body forming only the coverings of this real Self called *Ātman*. Knowledge exists neither in the external objects, nor in the mind; it is the very nature of the *Ātman*. It is Perfection in Itself; It is self-luminous. Just as light passing through tinted glass assumes various colours and forms, the light of *Ātman* passing through the mind reveals thoughts and external objects. Every act of knowing is thus an act of self-revelation. All knowledge lies within us. The act of knowing manifests this inner light. That is why, according to Swamiji `Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man.'

This is a dynamic theory of education based on India's ancient religion-the Vedānta. According to Vedānta, knowledge is the very nature of *Brahman*, or the Being which is the

substratum of the whole universe. The self of man called Ātman is inseparable from *Brahman*. This knowledge is covered by ignorance. This ignorance, according to the *Pañcadaśī*, is of two types: *mūla-avidyā*-primordial ignorance, and tūla-avidyā- ignorance regarding knowledge of particular objects. Ordinary perception of an object, say, a pot, or a tree, or a man, is the removal of the ignorance (*tūla-avidyā*) about that object. Ordinary perception, however, cannot remove the primordial ignorance (*mūla-avidyā*) which can be destroyed only through supersensuous perception. Education in ancient India aimed at the destruction of both types of ignorance through a graded process. The significance of this ancient concept was for the first time expressed in modern idiom by Swami Vivekananda by his definition of education that `it is the manifestation of the perfection already in man.' Explaining the whole concept Swamiji wrote:

....this knowledge, again, is inherent in man. No knowledge comes from outside; it is all inside. What we say a man `knows' should, in strict psychological language, be what he `discovers' or `unveils'; what a man `learns' is really what he `discovers,' by taking the cover off his own soul, which is a mine of infinite knowledge.

We say Newton discovered gravitation. Was it sitting anywhere in a corner waiting for him? It was in his own mind, the time came and he found it out.

All knowledge, therefore, secular or spiritual, is in the human mind. In many cases it is not discovered, but remains covered; and when the covering is being slowly taken off, we say, `we are learning' and the advance of knowledge is made by the advance of this process of uncovering. The man from who this veil is being lifted is the more knowing man; the man upon whom it lies thick is ignorant; and the man from whom it has entirely gone is all-knowing, omniscient.[5]

(ii)

Religion: the Core of Education

From the above discussion, we can understand the similarity between Swamiji's definition of education, and his definition of religion. (`Religion is the manifestation of the divinity already in man.') For Swamiji, ordinary education is only a part of the individual's larger attempt at Self-realization, which Swamiji means by the word `religion.' While, by the word `self,' the modern Western educationists mean only the empirical self or the ego: whereas by that word Swamiji meant the transcendental Self or Ātman. That is why Swamiji said:

I look upon religion as the innermost core of education. Mind, I do not mean my own, or anyone else's opinion about religion.[6]

It was J. F. Herbart who first pointed out the need for arranging the curriculum around a `core-subject', which according to him, should be the history of mankind. The remaining subjects were to be taught with the `core-subject' providing the inter-connection. Swamiji's idea of education was that it should have religion (spirituality) as the core subject, in the

Indian curricula. This idea is not as impracticable as it may appear to many people. Children could be taught that their real nature is pure, and that they are all parts of the Universal Life. They could be taught from an early age to see life as sacred, and every kind of good action,- physical and mental-an attempt to express this divinity of life; and every form of service, an act of worshipping God. Science, art and social studies must be taught as component parts of the Divine Life. History should be taught not as a series of conflicts of cultures, but as the record of the struggles of human spirit to triumph over matter and the evils of materialism. Children should be taught, above all, that the goal of life is Self-realization, and every form of discipline is a step towards its fulfilment. When children understand that science, art, and social life have a higher purpose, life will appear to them as meaningful, and existence itself, a great privilege. This will arouse hope and self-confidence in them, and as they grow, they will be able to face the problems of life with courage, and make life a blessing for them, and for others. This was the ideal that Swamiji had in mind, when he said that religion is the core of education. It is a perfectly practical ideal, if we are prepared to undertake a root-and-branch reform in the education of our children.

(iii)

Need for Development of Moral Character

Closely connected with Swamiji's theory of religion as the `core-subject' is his idea that the purpose of education is man-making:

Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested, all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-making, assimilation of ideas. If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library.[7]

Here again there is a superficial resemblance of Swamiji's idea to Herbart's well-known dictum that the goal of education is the formation of character. But while Herbart's concept of morality was based on obedience to social norms and the Biblical commandments, Swamiji based his concept on the deeper principle of manifestation of man's potential divinity.

Another important moral principle of Swamiji which is in tune with the ancient Hindu tradition is the practice of *brahmacarya* or continence. The sublimation and retention of the creative powers of man is essential for the health and development of the brain and its faculties. Swamiji said:

Complete continence gives great intellectual and spiritual power.[8]

Controlled desire leads to the highest result. Transform the sexual energy into spiritual energy.... The stronger this force, the more can be done with it. Only a powerful current of water can do hydraulic mining.[9]

By the observance of strict *brahmacarya* all learning can be mastered in a very short time-one

has an unfailing memory of what one hears or knows but once. It is owing to this want of continence that everything is on the brink of ruin in our country.[10]

The chaste brain has tremendous energy and gigantic will-power. Without chastity there can be no spiritual strength. Continence gives wonderful control over mankind. The spiritual leaders of men have been very continent and this is what gave them power.[11]

Every boy should be trained to practise absolute *brahmacarya*, and then, and then only, faith-*śraddhā*-will come.[12]

It is this lack of faith in themselves and the higher values of life that is the bane of modern youth. Swamiji wanted to restore this faith. Hence he placed great importance on *śraddhā* or faith as an integral part of education. He said:

The idea of true *śraddhā* must be brought back once more to us, the faith, in our own selves must be reawakened, and then only, all the problems which face our country will gradually be solved by ourselves.[13]

This faith in themselves was in the hearts of our ancestors, this faith in themselves was the motive power that pushed them forward and forward in the march of civilization; and if there has been defect, mark my words, you will find that degeneration to have started on the day our people lost this faith in themselves.[14]

To preach the doctrine of *śraddhā* or genuine faith is the mission of my life. Let me repeat to you that this faith is one of the potent factors of humanity..... First have faith in yourselves. Know that though one may be a little bubble and another may be a mountain-high wave, yet behind both the bubble and the wave there is the infinite ocean.[15]

Therefore, my brethren, teach this life-saving, great, ennobling, grand doctrine to your children, even from their very birth.[16]

(iv)

Importance of Concentration

One of the chief achievements of the ancient Hindu sages was the development of the science of concentration. The technique of concentration was perfected in India more than in any other place in the world. It is the ridge-pole of Hindu spiritual disciplines. Swamiji wanted to introduce the benefit of these discoveries of ancient *yogis* into the field of education and apply it as a means of quickening and widening the educative process. He said:

To me the very essence of education is concentration of mind, not the collecting of facts. If I had to do my education over again, and had any voice in the matter, I would not study facts at all. I would develop the power of concentration and detachment, and then with a perfect instrument I would collect facts at will. Side by side, in the child, should be developed the

power of concentration and detachment.[17]

Even the lowest shoeblack, if he gives more concentration, will black shoes better; the cook with concentration will cook a meal all the better. In making money, or in worshipping God, or in doing anything, the stronger the power of concentration, the better will that thing be done. This is the one call, the one knock, which opens the gates of nature, and lets out floods of light. This, the power of concentration, is the only key to the treasure-house of knowledge.[18]

(v)

Education for Self-support and Self-help

The knowledge and moral character that the student acquires through education should help him in facing the problems of life and to earn a decent livelihood. It should enable him to stand on his own legs. Swamiji asked:

The education which does not help the common masses of people to equip themselves for the struggle for life, which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy, and the courage of a lion-is it worth the name?[19]

Mere book learning won't do. We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet.[20]

What we want are Western science coupled with Vedānta, *brahmacarya* as the guiding motto, and also *śraddhā* and faith in one's own self.[21]

Swamiji wanted our young men to learn the skills that the Western world had developed, especially their technology, organizing capacity and business efficiency.

What we need.....is to study, independent of foreign control, different branches of the knowledge that is our own, and with it the English language, and Western science; we need technical education and all else that may develop industries so that men, instead of seeking for service, may earn enough to provide for themselves, and save something against a rainy day. [22]

Practical Means of Spreading Education

Regarding the practical side of education Swami Vivekananda knew only too well that in the first place it was a slow process. He said:

Kings having gone, the power is the people's. We have, therefore, to wait till the people are educated, till they understand their needs and are ready and able to solve their problems. The tyranny of the minority is the worst tyranny in the world. Therefore, instead of frittering

away our energies on ideal reforms, which will never become practical, we had better go to the root of the evil and make a legislative body, that is to say, educate our people, so that they may be able to solve their own problems. Until that is done all these ideal reforms will remain ideals only. The new order of things is the salvation of the people by the people, and it takes time to make it workable, especially in India, which has always in the past been governed by kings.[23]

Secondly, Swamiji knew that the educational reform that he wanted to bring about would not come from the British Government. Democracy becomes successful only when it becomes a government of the people, by the people, and for the people-as Lincoln defined it. This means that the masses must be educated and made conscious of their responsibility in shaping their own destinies. In India the people had for centuries been under the rule of kings-native and foreign. The village councils or Panchayats, which for centuries formed the backbone of Indian polity, ceased to be democratic long ago as they were in most cases dominated by powerful local chieftains. Hence education of the masses had been neglected for a very long time. With the attainment of freedom and democracy, India has woken to the dire need of spreading education among its millions of people, and much has already been done in this direction. But during Swamiji's time educational machinery was controlled by the British Government, and its goal, as openly declared by Lord Macaulay, was the introduction of the values and mores of British society in the life of Indians so as to make them better fitted as the subject race.

Swamiji for sometime seems to have entertained the hope of influencing some of the Maharajas to start educational and social reforms in their states. That was one of the reasons why he contacted several ruling princes and occasionally lived in their palaces, and later on wrote several inspiring letters to them and their Dewans. But with the British Government having its finger in every affair of the native States, the Maharajas themselves couldn't do much. The wealth of the country was being spirited away, and very little of it was directed to spread education in the villages, containing 80% of the population.

All this convinced Swamiji of the need for organizing private bodies for the spread of not only religion but also secular education among the masses. He also knew that a central organization was needed to direct and control the activities of these private bodies. He expressed his wish to start such a self- directing institution in one of his lectures in India:

My whole ambition in life is to set in motion a machinery which will bring noble ideas to the door of everybody, and then let men and women settle their own fate. Let them know what our forefathers as well as other nations have thought on the most momentous questions of life. Let them see specially what others are doing now, and then decide. We are to put the chemicals together, the crystallization will be done by nature according to her laws.[24]

At first, Swamiji had a plan of starting a Vedānta college in Madras (with a temple of Universal Religion attached to it) to train preachers and send them like waves rolling irresistibly all over the country, as he put it.

Later on, while in America, Swamiji changed his plan and decided to start an extension to the already existing Ramakrishna Order of monks into a philanthropic body called the Ramakrishna Mission. Experience had taught him that without a body of dedicated monks, no philanthropic work can survive long in India. In the Ramakrishna Mission, monks and lay people cooperate in its multifarious activities.

Another reason for the starting of the Ramakrishna Mission was to put into practice Swamiji's idea of *gurukula-vāsa* (students staying with their teacher) for boys. He knew that the ancient ideal of children living with a teacher in his home was no longer possible. The next best thing would be to start hostels run by Hindu monks on the lines of ancient Buddhist monks. The various educational institutions run by the Ramakrishna Mission are trying to put into practice Swamiji's ideal of *gurugṛha-vāsa*.

Swamiji knew very well that his ideas and ideals of education could not be put into practice unless thewhole educational machinery of the nation was controlled. That is why he said:

.....We must have the whole education of our country, spiritual and secular, in our own hands, and it must be on national lines, through national methods as far as practical. Of course this is a very big scheme, a very big plan. I do not know whether it will ever work out. But we must begin the work.[25]

These words were uttered by the great Swami about eighty years ago. Now the British have left India and the education is entirely left to a government elected by the Indian people. But has Swamiji's dream of spreading religious education, man-making education, ever been carried out? We shall have to make an unbiased evaluation.

Impact and Evaluation of Swamiji's Contribution

The lacuna in implementing Swamiji's ideas on a national scale has been the neglect of the education of children. Swamiji's plan of spreading religious education has not yet been carried out even though the entire education has come into the hands of Indians. What are the reasons for this? In the first place, politics has been the overriding concern of the people who govern the country. The value of education in democracy has not been fully understood. Secondly, people who are responsible for the education of children are themselves either ignorant of or are indifferent to the spiritual heritage of India. But the third and most important cause is the ignorance of the people themselves of the power of ideas. We, in India, have not yet developed the capacity to convert ideas into power. We are always expecting some miracle to happen by which our country will suddenly become prosperous and great. There are no short cuts to greatness either for the individual or for the nation. Change and progress have to be achieved through hard and cooperative endeavour.

The hope of spreading religious education in India lies with private organizations. Schools and hostels being mostly under government control, very little can be done through these. What we need more and more are extra-academic cultural centres already working under the guidance of various religious bodies, like the Vivekananda Balaka Sangha, Ramakrishna

Math, Bangalore. For this we have to strengthen the Rama-krishna Mission. Not only that, more and more non-monastic Hindu organizations, without political affiliations, should come forward to take up the burden of spreading religious education among the masses. Already some have come up. But we need more. Above all, we need closer cooperation and understanding among all these organizations and workers. As Swamiji said, we need three things for success: (1) faith in the power of good; (2) absence of jealousy and suspicion; and (3)helping all who are doing good work.

Lastly, it should be mentioned that society has not yet reached such a high level of development and integration so as to make all the ideas of Swami Vivekananda practical for all its members. This however does not mean, these ideals are impractical. They are based on his prophetic intuition and are of eternal value.

Time alone can show if and how long Western culture will endure. But as far as India is concerned, her future is clear-unless and until the masses are raised to a high level of material and spiritual well-being she cannot survive. Free India is all set to face this challenge of history and achieve the status of a Satya-yuga-an Age of Truth. According to Swamiji the birth of Sri Ramakrishna marked the beginning of such a new Age. Whatever may be the deeper meaning ofthis statement, people emancipated from age-old tyrannies are already turning to the message of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, and are bound to do so more and more when they realize that herein lies the promise and vindication of their noblest aspirations.

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Thoughts on Education

by Albert Einstein

Transfer of Tradition

The school has always been the most important means of trasferring the wealth of tradition from one generation to the next. This applies today in an even higher degree than in former times, for through modern development of the economic life, the family as bearerof tradition and education has been weakened. The continu- ance and health of human society is therefore in a still higher degree dependent on the school than formerly.

Sometimes one sees in the school simply the instrument for transferring a certain maximum quantity of knowledge to the growing generation. But that is not right. Knowledge is dead; the school, however, serves the living. It should develop in the young individuals those qualities and capabilities which are of value for the welfare of the commonwealth. But that does not mean that individuality should be destroyed and the individual become a mere tool of the community, like a bee or an ant. For, a community of standardized individuals without personal originality and personal aims would be a poor community without possibilities for development. On the contrary, the aim must be the training of independently acting and thinking individuals, who, however, see in the service of the community their highest life problem.

Not by Words Alone

But how shall one try to attain this ideal? Should one perhaps try to realize this aim by moralizing? Not at all. Words are and remain an empty sound, and the road to perdition has ever been accompanied by lip-service to an ideal. But personalities are not formed by what is heard and said, but by labour and activity.

To me the worst thing seems to be for a school principally to work with methods of fear, force, and artificial authority. Such treatment destroys the sound sentiments, the sincerity and the self-confidence of the pupil. It produces the submissive subject.

Darwin's theory of the struggle for existence and the selectivity connected with it has by many people been cited as authorization of the encouragement of the spirit of competition. Some people also in such a way have tried to prove pseudo-scientifically the necessity of the destructive economic struggle of competition between individuals. But this is wrong, because man owes his strength for existence to the fact that he is a socially living animal. As little as a battle between single ants of an ant-hill is essential for survival, just so little is this the case with the individual members of a human community.

Success Not the Aim of Life

Therefore one should guard against preaching to the young man success in the customary sense as the aim of life. For a successful man is he who receives a great deal from his fellow-men, usually incomparably more than corresponds to his service to them. The value of a man, however, should be seen in what he gives and not in what he is able to receive.

The most important motive for work in the school and in life is the pleasure in work, pleasure in its result, and the knowledge of the value of the result to the community. In the awakening and strengthening of these psychological forces in the young man, I see the most important task given by school. Such a psychological foundation alone leads to a joyous desire for the highest possesions of men, knowledge and artist-like workmanship.

If a young man has trained his muscles and physical endurance, by gymnastics and walking, he will later be fitted for every physical work. This is also analogous to the training of the

mind and the exercising of the mental and manual skill. Thus the wit was not wrong who defined education in this way: Education is that which remains if one has forgotten everything he learned in school. For this reason I am not at all anxious to take sides in the struggle between the followers of the classical philogic, historical, education and the education more devoted to natural science.

Not Specialization but Harmonious Personality

On the other hand, I want to oppose the idea that school has to teach directly that special knowledge and those accomplishments which man has to use later directly in life. The demands of life are much too manifold to let such a specialized training in school appear possible. Apart from that, it seems to me, moreover, objectionable to treat the individual like a dead tool. The school always has as its aim that the young man leave it as a harmonious personality, not as a specialist. This, in my opinion, is true in a certain sense even for technical schools whose students will devote themselves to a quite definite profession. The development of general ability for independent thinking and judgment should always be placed foremost, not the acquisition of special knowledge. If a person masters the fundamentals of his subject and has learned tothink and work independently he will surely find his wayand, besides, will better be able to adapt himself to progress and changes than the person whose training principally consists in the acquiring of detailed knowledge.

It is not enough to teach man a speciality. Through it he may become a kind of useful machine, but not a harmoniously developed personality. It is essential that the student acquires an understanding of and a lively feeling for values. He must acquire a vivid sense of the beautiful and of the morally good. Otherwise, he with his specialized knowledge more closely resembles a well-trained dog than a harmoniously developed person. He must learn to understand the motives of human beings, their illusions, and their sufferings in order to acquire a proper relationship to individual fellow-men and to the community.

Humanities Important

These precious things are conveyed to the younger generation through personal contact with those who teach, not-or at least not in the main-through text-books. It is this that primarily constitutes and preserves culture. This is what I have in mind when Irecommend the `humanities' as important, not just a dry specialized knowledge in the fields of history and philosophy.

Overemphasis on the competitive system and premature specialization on the ground of immediate usefulness kill the spirit on which all cultural life depends, specialized knowledge included.

Independent Thinking

It is also vital to a valuable education that independent critical thinking be developed in the young human being, a development that is greatly jeopardized by overburdening him with

too much and with too varied subjects. Overburdening necessarily leads to superficiality. Teaching should be such that what is offered is perceived as a valuable gift and not as a hard duty.

The Spiritual Element in Our Educational Objective

Swami Nirvedananda

We are still a developing nation. Momentous social and economic readjustments have to be made before we may securely stand on our feet and keep pace with the advanced nations of the modern world, so far as our material progress is concerned. While doing this, are we to radically transform ourselves after the patterns of these nations or to evolve a pattern of our own suited to our genius, temperament and traditional culture? This is a very serious problem which has to be solved once for all, without any shade of doubt and ambiguity, before the entire objective of our education may be fixed.

We cannot possibly change our skin altogether without jeopardizing our very existence as a distinct and useful unit of the human society. Sri Aurobindo wrote: ``There are deeper issues for India herself, since by following certain tempting directions she may conceivably become a nation like many others evolving an opulent industry and commerce, a powerful organization of social and political life, an immense military strength, practising power-politics with a high degree of success, guarding and extending zealously her gains and her interests, dominating even a large part of the world, but in this apparently magnificent progression forfeiting her Swadharma, losing her soul. The ancient India and her spirit might disappear altogether and we would have only one more nation like the others and that would be a real gain neither to the world nor to us..... It would be a tragic irony of fate if India were to throw away her spiritual heritage at the very moment when in the rest of the world there is more and more turning towards her for spiritual help and a saving Light.''

Peace-loving people all over the world are now looking out for something substantial that may successfully arrest the present ominous march of events. Roger Babson, the noted economist who foresaw the crash of the stock market in October, 1929, later predicted that another depression and probably another war were in the way. ``While doing this,'' he said, ``Depression is inevitable; war isn't-but it surely will come unless the nations can develop a world government with authority to regulate such things as tariff and immigration-until the world's businessmen stop worrying about profits, the working men about their wages, and the politicians about votes.'' ``In other words,'' he said, ``a spiritual awakening is the only solution of the problem.'' Mr.Babson seems to have hit the nail right on the head. For, no surer remedy can be found for the present precarious state of things all over the world than what he has suggested.

This was precisely what Swami Vivekananda had the keenness to foresee in the late nineties of the last (19th) century. He felt the paramount need of a spiritual awakening of the people of the world for ushering in an era of peace and concord, even for preserving the very existence of the human race. As a matter of fact, he said in the course of a speech delivered

in London that the Western world, in spite of its epoch-making material progress, appeared to him to be sitting on the top of a volcano that might burst any moment and destroy it, unless it cared to readjust itself on a firm spiritual basis.

Since the Swami's warning, one World War has followed another in quick succession, and signs are not lacking to portend still another in future. What can stop this suicidal course of mankind? What can avert the approaching crisis in the history of human civilization? Nothing less than a spiritual reawakening of the human race can possibly do it, as the Swami would have us believe.

On the face of it, this appears to be a tall demand. Yet it is not an impossible one. Perhaps, it is the inevitable step ahead in the course of human evolution. Obviously, as long as the nations of the world are not able to shake themselves off from the fatal grip of greed, jealousy and hypocrisy, peace and security cannot but remain a far cry. Humanity has to grow wiser, otherwise it is doomed to become extinct. The sovereign and perhaps the only remedy, namely, spiritual reawakening, has to be tried in right earnest, if humanity is to continue its existence.

This is a very stiff job no doubt, yet Swami Vivekananda wanted us to believe that it was quite a feasible one. In India he discovered a mighty spiritual potential, and he believed intensely that when this would be released India would become vitalized, and like an awakened leviathan, she would be able to work wonders by resuscitating the spiritual consciousness of the world outside. By waking up her dormant spiritual energy she was to rescue human civilization from the impending crash, this was what the Swami visualized. And this, according to him, is precisely the mission for fulfilling which she has been living through scores of centuries with her ancient cultural heritage intact. To ensure substantial amity among the various peoples of the world, to rear up a real brotherhood of nations, is her sacred task, and this it will be possible for her to perform only through a spiritual reawakening of her national life.

Moreover, India cannot afford to cut herself away from her age-old cultural moorings. That, according to Swami Vivekananda, will spell her death. Spirituality is the very life-centre of her people. She has been trained through the ages to sacrifice everything for spiritual ends. Renunciation and service are the channels through which her national energy has been flowing through centuries. Even now, a selfless life dedicated to disinterested service of mankind is honoured in this land more than any of the earthly dignitaries. This was why Mahatma Gandhi could easily become the idol of our people, though to a typical, sophisticated Westerner he might appear as nothing more than a `half-naked fakir.' This shows the bent of our mass mind created by persistent training through millennia.

In our ancient *gurukula* system spiritual and secular education went together. In the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* one finds: *`dve vidye veditavye parā caivāparāca.' Parā-vidyā* stands for spiritual education, and *aparā-vidyā* for secular education. Such a combination should even

now be revived as the central feature of any healthy programme of education in this land.

Parā-vidyā **really means knowledge of the Self. This knowledge alone dispels all ignorance, all weakness, and manifests the Divinity within man. This is the highest goal to be reached. Then alone perfection is attained. ``Education is,'' as the Swami pointed out, ``the manifestation of the perfection already in man.'' Hence, *parā-vidyā* is an indispensable factor of any process of real education.**

Of course, it is not up to anyone and everyone to reach this goal. Yet this blessed ideal should not be lost sight of. Everyone should be taught to value it as the highest ideal of man and inspired to advance towards it as far as possible. It is a priceless legacy handed down to us through scores of generations by the sages of old, and we cannot afford to throw it away only because the Western countries are not in a mood to appreciate its value. Such a spiritual ideal set before our people is sure to qualify them to function as the standard-bearers of universal peace and harmony and thereby to fulfil the sacred mission of this land.

Particularly, when we are about to broadcast education among our masses, we should take special care to see that they do not lose their grip on their age-old spiritual ideas and ideals. By no means should they be made to swallow any type of Godless education. That will spell disaster. The individuality of our people lies in their characteristic culture based on some lofty spiritual ideas and ideals. If they lose this individuality, they run the risk of becoming extinct.

Hence our educational programme should be so planned that it may enable our people to remain loyal to their spiritual ideals and at the same time to master all that is necessary for making them intensely practical like the materially advanced nations of the modern era. They have to be equipped for the dual task of ensuring their material progress as well as of demonstrating effectively before the world the supreme worth of their spiritual heritage in securing peace and harmony among the various nations. Love of God, country and humanity, sympathy, tolerance, impeccable honesty, and uncompromising regard for truth have to be combined in their character with the dynamism of the Western countries. Our education should be `essentially man-making, character-building assimilation of ideas', as Swami Vivekananda put it. And through education our national character has to be built upon the best elements of Eastern and Western cultures. Retaining all that is precious in our own spirituality-centred civilization, we have to glean from the West whatever will be found to be valuable and congenial. In this way we have to turn out a new type of manhood, vigorous yet calm, mighty yet tolerant and sympathetic, idealistic yet practical to the backbone. Such a blending of the East and the West, of `Sattva' and `Rajas', self-poise with dynamism, is what is needed for an epoch-making resurgence of our national life at this critical hour of human history. Swami Vivekananda's stirring appeal to us points unerringly towards such an objective of our nation-building plan. It will be a terrible mistake if we do not heed to his call and shape our educational programme accordingly.

The Ideal of an All-Round Education

Swami Yatiswarananda

More than six decades back, Swami Vivekananda pointed out the defects of our modern education and suggested in its place the right type of `Man-making' education. The following quotations give in a nut-shell his main ideas:

The education that you are getting now has some good points, but it has a tremendous disadvantage which is so great that the good things are all weighed down. In the first place it is not a man-making education, it is merely and entirely a negative education. A negative education or any training that is based on negation, is worse than death. The child is taken to school, and the first thing he learns is that his father is a fool, and the second thing that his grand-father is a lunatic, the third thing that all his teachers are hypocrites, the fourth, that all the sacred books are lies. By the time he is sixteen, he is a mass of negation, lifeless and boneless.

Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brains and runs riot there undigested all your life.

We must have life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas.

If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library.

The Ideal of Character-building Education

The object of the ideal system of education should not merely be the advancement of theoretical knowledge but also the advancement of life, development of the highest powers and capacities, and the unfoldment of the noblest potentialities of the student. It is not enough to furnish him with information. He must be enabled at the same time to apply intelligently to his own life all the ideas and ideals he has learnt and gathered and thus promote his growth-physically, intellectually, morally and spiritually.

In a spirit of righteous indignation, Swami Vivekananda observes:

We want the abolition of that system which aims at educating our boys in the same manner as that of the man who battered his ass, being advised that it could thereby be turned into ahorse.

The education which does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the struggle of life, which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy and courage, is not worth the name. Real education is that which enables the student to stand on his own strength, take his rightful place in life and play his part as efficiently as possible. So the Swami says:

We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind increased, the intellect expanded and by which one can stand on one's own feet.

I never define anything. Still, education may be described as a development of faculties, not an accumulation of words, as a training of individuals to will rightly and efficiently.

Many of the greatest thinkers both in the East and the West have expressed similar ideas. It is being recognized more and more, that education should be `the foundation of character, the culture of the spirit, the building of the soul.' Thus, among many of the idealistic educationists, there exists a remarkable agreement as to the fundamentals in the scheme of education, although there certainly are and will naturally be differences in stress with reference to the detailed working out of the system.

The Concept of an All-round Education

We need not discuss here the superiority or otherwise of the different theories as to the true nature of the human personality. But it is impossible to formulate any system of education without having a definite conception of the nature, the inner potentialities and the future possibilities of the being we want to educate and train. Swami Vivekananda declares:

Each soul is potentially divine and the goal is to manifest this divinity within..... Religion is the manifestation of perfection already in man.

The attainment of perfection brings out the divine nature. The goal of human existence is to manifest the perfection and divinity of the soul by removing the accretions and encrustations which have grown round what is taken to be the personality.

But, with reference to the education of the child, we are not concerned with this ultimate nature and goal. We are now interested mainly in the child as a human being, in the course he is to follow for the evolution and growth of his personality. It is enough for our present purpose if we regard the student under our care as a self-conscious entity, dwelling in the physical body, having organs of sense-perception and possessing the `inner-organ' called the mind, with its faculties of intellect, feeling and will. These faculties are capable of being developed and evolved into efficient instruments of knowledge which enable a person to follow the right code of conduct and play his part in the drama of life, as well as possible. Associated with the mind, the self-conscious entity or spirit becomes a psychological being. Connected with the physical body, the psychological being becomes an embodied being-a human personality. Thus true education means an all-round culture-physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual. A complete system of education cannot disregard any of these different aspects. It must take into account the development of a healthy body, a proper control of sense-impulses and instincts, the acquirement of knowledge, sublimation and proper direction of feeling and sentiment, development of the will and the sense of duty. It must have the rightful place for soul-culture which removes mental darkness and reveals the glory of the pure Self by enabling one to rise above the false personality founded on identification with the unreal and nourished by false desires and morbid gratification of senses. The physical body is to be sustained by proper material food, the mind to be developed through the assimilation of the right type of ideas and emotions, and the soul, too, to be nourished by

earnest prayer and meditation.

The Place of Religion in Education

As has been pointed out already, in formulating a healthy scheme of education, we must bear in mind that the human being is not an automaton but a living, self-conscious entity, possessing an innate moral and spiritual nature, which is to be expressed in all its glory. There is, therefore, the necessity of moral and spiritual culture, without which no education is complete and fruitful. The conception of a merely intellectual education that is prevalent in our modern world needs a thorough overhauling.

Seeing the evil effects of such an education, one of our great Indian thinkers, Dr. Bhagavan Das, has observed: `We have heard of the three R's long enough. The fourth R of genuine religion is more important than them all.'

Many an educationist in the West also thinks ina similar strain. Says one, `We commonly classify education under three heads-primary, secondary and higher. To these I should like to add a fourth, highest. The highest education is religion, but that is also education.'

Rightly does a thoughtful Western writer observe: `Both East and West seem to feel that an educational system that does not eventually lead a man out of the world of human affairs into the wider consciousness of spiritual things has failed in its mission and will not measure up to the soaring demand of the human soul.'

In the light of these remarks, we can now appreciate the memorable remarks of Swami Vivekananda:

I look upon religion as the innermost core of education. Mind, I do not mean own or anybody else's opinion about religion. The true eternal principles have to be held before people. Religion is the rice and everything else is like curries. Taking only curry causes indigestion, and so is the case with taking rice alone.

The Swami had before him the ideal of a universal religion which, in the words of an English educationist, must also `inevitably take into full and vivid account the significance of all forms of religion, and seek moral values in all.'

By religion, which is inseparable from ethics, we mean not doctrines or dogmas, forms or ceremonies, but the manifestation of the innate divinity in man, his sense of purity, sympathy for fellow-beings, ideal of true freedom, and also awakening of divine consciousness. All these may be regarded as ornaments to the soul, the glory of which man forgets owing to ignorance and due to lack of conscious control of his personality in the light of the highest knowledge.

Ordinarily, education and culture do not go together. We become literate but not cultured, intellectual but not self-controlled, self-conscious but not altruistic. And even if we become

moral, it is more out of fear and constraint than out of intrinsic goodness and purity. But true morality should be natural and not forced. It should be the self-expression of inner principles and must have its foundations in the Divine Spirit of man. And so there lies the great necessity for formulating a revised system of education that will combine physical and mental culture with soul-culture, and bring into existence a new type of men and women. These, endowed with right knowledge, noble sentiments, controlled will-power and a scrupulous sense of duty will, to quote the words of Swami Vivekananda, `work for their own welfare as well as for the welfare of humanity at large.' Religion of the right type makes a man realize the God dwelling in his own heart and in all beings, and thus brings him closer both to God and to mankind; it helps him in the emergence of a new spiritualized humanity.

Education and the Ideal of Spiritualized Service

`Every boy,' declares Swami Vivekananda, `should be trained to practise absolute *brahmacarya*, and then, *śraddhā*, faith will come.' The word *śraddhā* means faith in oneself, faith in the Divine Existence and grace, faith in the scriptures revealed to the sages, faith in one's potentialities and capacity for self-realizations. In his inimitable way, the Swami gives a new definition of the word, *śraddhā*:

The old religion said that he was an atheist who did not believe in God. The new religion says that he is an atheist who does not believe in himself. But it is not selfish faith. It means faith in all, for you are all. It is the greatest faith which will make the world better.

As already pointed out, the Swami's ideal of education is based on the realization that man, in his essential nature, is Ātman, pure Spirit. The body of ours is a Devālaya-the temple of the Divine Being. Just as the soul animates the body, God dwells as the Soul of all souls. The body is the Brahma-Mandira, the Temple of Brahman, the Supreme Spirit.

The indomitable energy of the youth is to be manifested not only in his studies and in attempts at self-mastery, but also in loving service to his fellow-beings. The education of a young man is never complete without his developing this sense of service. The ancient seers of India after their vision of the Cosmic Being declared:

He is the all-pervading Being manifest in all. He has innumerable hands, eyes and feet. It is He that has encompassed the whole universe and it is He again who transcends it.

In the modern times, Sri Ramakrishna gave expression to the same experience when he said:

I see men, animals and other beings-all as pure Spirit..... When I see a man, I see that it is God himself who walks on earth.

If God is manifest in and as all beings, who then dares to speak of showing mercy to another? Declares Sri Ramakrishna: `It is not mercy, but service-service to the God in man.'

From this spiritual realization and instruction of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda got a

new inspiration. Hearing these words and grasping their true import, the Swami observed: `Today I have heard a great truth. I shall proclaim it some day, if the Lord so wills.'

The Lord did will and so we find him declaring with the passion of his soul:

May I be born again and again, and suffer thousands of miseries, so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, the sum-total of all souls. And above all, my God the wicked, my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races, of all species, is the special object of my worship.

I bequeath to you young men, this sympathy, this struggle for the poor, the ignorant and the oppressed. Vow then to devote your whole lives to those millions going down and down every day. You have read: `*matṛdevo bhava, pitṛdevo bhava*'- Let mother be as God to you, let father be as God to you. I say, `Dardira Devo Bhava, Mūrkha Devo Bhava.' The poor, the illiterate, the ignorant, the afflicted-let these be your God. Know that service to these alone is the highest religion.

This ideal of spiritualized service is first to be realized by the teachers themselves, and then only will they be able to inspire their students and enable them to make religion a great power for accomplishing good values. Religion thus finds its fulfilment both in Self-realization and loving service to God in man. It thus proves to be a blessing to the teachers, to the students, and to all people alike.

The Hindu Philosophy of Education

by Swami Harshananda

Among the many drawbacks in our present-day educational system, we should give pride of place to the fact that it is a pale copy of the Western model. We have adopted the outward form and frills of an alien model without comprehending its inner spirit and source of strength. Our Universities and Teachers' Training Colleges suffer from the same limitation as they are all an integral part of this borrowed educational system. Do we not have a philosophy of education which we can call our own, which is a product of our cultural ethos and which could answer best to the requirements of our social realities as well as our future needs? Do we have to be always dependent for our ideals, methods and technique of education on Western authorities like John Dewey, Alfred North Whitehead, Kilpatrick and so on, however eminent they may be? Does this not speak of our mentality of slavish imitation? This is a matter which we should deeply ponder if we are to bring about a far-reaching and qualitative change in our existing educational system.

In ancient days, scholars of eminance who were also models of good and noble living, were heads of *gurukulas* or seats of learning. In those days when printing was non-existent and even the art of writing was known to but a few, they were able to compress vast quantities of knowledge into *Sūtras* or aphorisms which could be leant by rote and which were made subjects of critical study through a process of open discussion and pointed commentaries.

The texts of many scriptures and scientific treatises have been preserved to this day in the form of these *Sūtras*. After the invention of writing, scholars upholding particular schools of thought began to write learned and lengthy commentaries. This is how original texts as well as the various commentaries on these texts were preserved for posterity.

This takes us to the guiding principles on which the ancient system of education was based. There is an interesting piece of admonition in the *śīkṣāvallī* section of *Taittirīyopaniṣad*, administered by the teacher or Ācārya to the pupil who has just completed his studies and become a *Snātaka* or graduate. It says: *yānyasmākaṁ sucaritāni, tāni tvayopāsyāni, no itarāṇi*.

``You are to emulate only such of those (good) qualities as are worthy of emulation; not others.'' In a similar strain another admonition is made to the student even at the commencement of his studies: *tejasvi nāvadhītamastu, mā vidviṣāvahai*.

``Let the studies that we together undertake be effulgent. Let there be no animosity between us.''

Here we have before us not just two pious wishes, but two basic guiding principles on which both the processes of teaching and learning are based. Although the teacher has acquired the capacity to teach by the acquisition of wide knowledge, he has the humility to say that he wishes to share his knowledge and experience with his pupil on equal terms. He is not obsessed with the idea that he is there to teach and the pupils to learn unquestioningly. If in this process of sharing any differences of opinion between the two surface, they should not be allowed to poison their relations or create hostility between the two. The teacher starts with the implicit belief that teaching itself has an inbuilt facet of learning and that he has as much to learn from the process of communication as the pupil himself. Were not these men the model teachers of ancient India?

Among the great teachers whose fame has been preserved through centuries is the sage Parāśara, the grandson of Brahmarṣi Vasiṣṭha and father of Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana Vyāsa. He was among the few originators of *gotras* or lineages of sacred learning and an author of *Smṛti*. To him is attributed an immortal statement of great insight and beauty: *sā vidyā ya vimuktaye*, meaning, ``That learning is true learning which can liberate a learner''. In this pithy statement a whole philosophy of education stands compressed. Because of its brevity the statement needs elucidation.

We have here two words *vidyā* and *vimukti*-which deserve to be analysed and commented upon. By *vidyā* is meant learning, wisdom, knowledge and experience. It is a generic term and includes any knowledge that enriches our mind and opens out new vistas of understanding. The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* divides this *vidyā* into *parā* and *aparā* (1.1.4), two categories which are different from each other but at the same time are complementary. That which enables you to establish communion with God or acquire transcendental experience is *parā-vidya*. All the rest is *aparā-vidyā*, which can also be called `*avidyā*'-that is `not-vidyā'. It does not mean ignorance or absence of knowledge. The *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad* (11) says: *avidyayā mṛtyuṁ tīrtvā*

***vidyayāmṛtamaśnute*.**

``With the aid of avidyā one circumvents that which is transitory and mortal; with the aid of *vidyā* he obtains the nectar of immortality.'' The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (1.2.1) says that ``hunger and thirst give mortality''. The implication is that having overcome this (mortality) through what we might call secular knowledge we must reach out for final liberation through mystic experience. Thus the ancients emphasized the need for both kinds of knowledge. Each has a positive function both for the individual and the society, but the ultimate goal is one; it is transcendental.

We must look at the other word *vimukti* in its wider, more appropriate sense. Though in the conventional connotation it is taken to mean escape from the chain of births and deaths, there are several intervening stages of liberation for man. Sri Ramakrishna once observed that it is ridiculous to preach philosophy to a hungry man. Even the effort of a person to free himself from poverty and hunger and be an independent, self-supporting member of society, is part of the liberation process. *Vidyā* or knowledge must endow a person with this capacity. That means, vocational training must be a part of the overall education system. It is equally the task of education to impart to the individual the art of living in a society, partaking of pleasures and pains of community living, to care for his personal health and the health of his environment, to make use of his creative talents, to ensure the preservation of inherited values and, in short, to make life worth living not only for himself and his family, but, to many others besides. This is the meaning of civilized life. These are also the fruits of freedom when it is exercised with restraint, purpose and imagination. They do not come from the void. They have to be cultivated. This is one of the primary aims of education. Even so, all these put together do not lead one to the final liberation.

As members of a community sharing a common heritage and a common future, we must live as equals whatever be the differences among us in terms of educational attainments, wealth, social status, sex, caste, colour etc. This is a prerequisite to civilized living anywhere and at any time. It is the essence of freedom and equality that one should not cancel the other in practice. The same educational process that prepares us for a life of freedom and equality should endow everyone with the moral strength to safeguard them when they are endangered. The second essential step in the liberation process is this cultivated quality of awareness of the equality of men and the exercise of freedom with wisdom and maturity. In essence, it should enable every human being to treat another person as an equally good human being.

This again is only another step towards liberation. Freedom will remain constrained so long as an individual is unable to speak out freely. This freedom of expression concerns the functioning of the individual's intellect without which the individuality of a person will remain supressed. Enslavement of the human mind by others in the sense that one is compelled to accept the ideas of others blindly is impermissible. Not even the greatest of thinkers or philosophers or supermen like Kṛṣṇa or Buddha or Śaṅkara ever asked men to accept their ideas blindly. They said: ``Examine this carefully and then do what you think is best.'' (`*vimṛśyaitad aśeṣeṇa yathecchasi tathā kuru*'-Gītā: 18.63). This is the essence of their

teaching. It is the task of good education to promote this kind of intellectual freedom. This may be called the third step in the liberation process.

In how many persons do we find this kind of freedom being actually exercised? Even those who are proud to proclaim their fearlessness in thought and speech are prisoners of a variety of passions and prejudices, likes and dislikes. The really liberated man not only has freed himself from external constraints but also from the physical and mental weakness within himself. It is the task of education to promote this kind of self-development. Freedom born of self-control or self-discipline is the real freedom. It is the last step in the individual's journey towards final liberation. The *parāvidyā* that the Upaniṣads speak of is just this kind of education. The Parāśara-concept of education is a total concept, involving not merely the economic, social and intellectual freedoms, but also the higher freedom for the soul of man. All other education is only tantamount to training in the limited fields.

In our philosophy of education, there must be a synthesis of *parā* and *aparā vidyās*. That is, our education must not only prepare us for a good living but also for the eventual liberation of the individual. This is what Swami Vivekananda called education for the promotion of character. It is a multi-faceted system, providing for the flavour of *brahmavidyā* even when it is *annavidyā* or education for a living. Devoid of this element, an education that promotes only material values creates a vacuum which, like the zero without a numeral to go with it, becomes valueless and futile.

In sum, education should provide for the healthy growth of the individual's body, mind and moral stamina, through various disciplines. It should, at the same time provide for self-realisation through other disciplines like prayer, meditation, japa and self-analysis. It becomes necessary to train teachers for this specific purpose. Asociety or nation which commands the services of well-trained and motivated teachers is assured a place of high respectability in the comity of nations. There is no doubt about it.